

# THE DUBLIN MAGAZINE

*A Quarterly Review  
of Literature, Science and Art.*

NEW SERIES

VOLUME 22

1947

KRAUS REPRINT CORPORATION

New York

1967

Printed in U.S.A.

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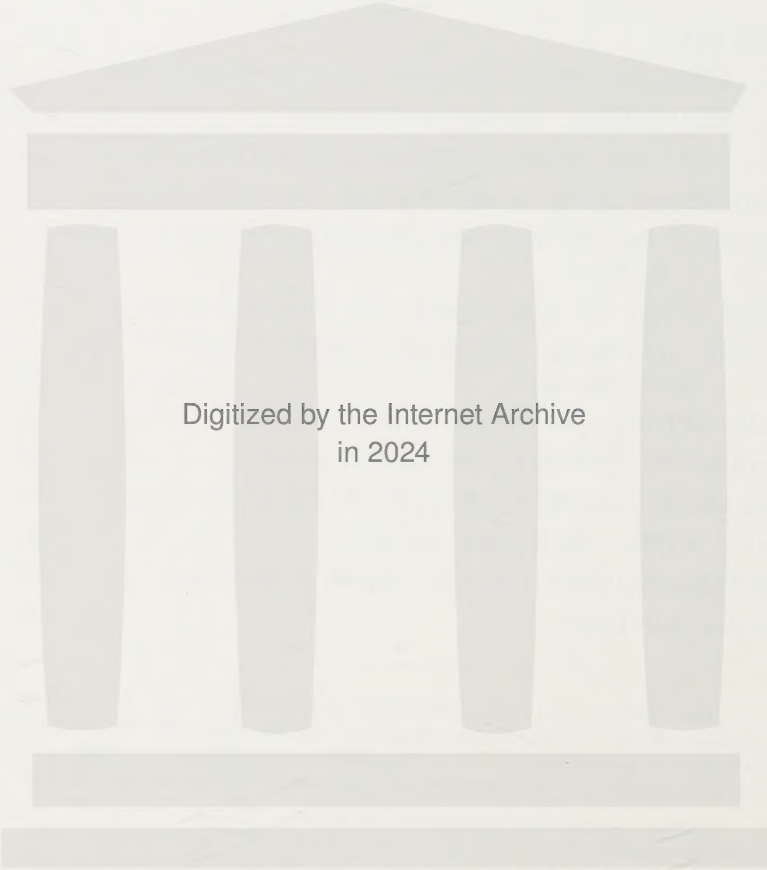
Letters should be addressed to 2 Crow Street, DUBLIN, and communications with regard to advertisements, subscriptions, etc., should be sent to the Manager of "The Dublin Magazine" at that address.

Price 2s. 6d.

Annual Subscription 10s. 6d. post free.

LONDON AGENT :

MESSRS. JOHN & EDWARD BUMPUS, LTD., 477 OXFORD STREET, W.1.



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# THE DUBLIN MAGAZINE

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Vol. XXII.—No. I.  
(New Series)

JANUARY—MARCH 1947.

Price 2/6

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## FROM FIELDS OF SORROW

*By Patrick MacDonogh*

WANDERING these well-loved fields from wood to wood  
And small duck-haunted lakes, I have asked myself  
Why they are seldom seen apart from sorrow,  
And put the thought away. But now I will make  
Talk of the thing and leave untouched that shelf  
From which, when the old house is still, I take  
Book after book, and hope in vain to borrow  
Cures for the trouble of unruly blood.

O melancholy landscape that I love !  
Low-lying fields whose long horizons hold  
No shelter from the watchful sky above,  
No heights to lessen its immensity,  
What sorrow broods, what nameless grief untold  
Asks with dumb patience for response from me ?  
That old wind-broken body of a tree  
At the slow river's bend knows more than I  
Whether in us you breed the epitome  
Of the long quarrel between earth and sky  
That will not finish till our star is cold.

Maybe his land absorbs man's history,  
As a house will, and makes his story plain  
That wise and sympathetic men may see  
Peace where peace was, and in earth's misery  
The emanation of long-buried pain.  
These fields, though far, are still continuous  
With Innishannon's plain and with the sod  
That banks Boyne water,—aye ! with Lord Edward street  
And pavements Pearse and Tom MacDonagh trod !



There's blood enough to chill far-wandering feet,  
 And names enough for winds to whisper us  
 That even strangers catch. But that's not all !  
 The fields of France, huge and indifferent,  
 Bury their dead, and fragrant twilights fall  
 Ghostless in Piedmont. Something more is meant !

Maybe a land takes on its character  
 As much from those it breeds as they from it,  
 And more than mortal tragedy may stir  
 The grass that cries above the famine pit.  
 Doomed to unrest, we were the fertile soil  
 In which the promise of eternity  
 Of peace in God took root : subtle, trefoil,  
 Complex in us the Triple Unity  
 Displaced the grass, the copper and the yew :  
 Earth's innocent certainties our father's knew  
 Were named our enemies : cold shadows fell  
 On field and flower that have not lifted yet,  
 Though every leaf in holy Derry lit  
 The love of angels and the Intangible  
 Breathed in created beauty. Our disease  
 Ripens beneath the consciousness of sin :  
 We are a race whose eyes are turned within  
 To seek perfection and all mysteries  
 That draw the mind from what lies next the hand :  
 Our hope is riddled by the intricacies  
 Of ever-worming thought,—and yet, and yet,  
 We, the inheritors of centuries  
 Of mystic contemplation, still regret  
 The loved appearance. Bywords in every land  
 For devilment and mirth and reckless wit,  
 We can create no comfortable mind,  
 No way to heal the imagined enmities  
 Of spirit and its flesh : there is not a town  
 But knows our blasphemy, the dreadful lie  
 We tell to our tormentors when we drown  
 Thought in debauchery,—but on that stair,  
 Where others find their wit, we pause to find  
 Our images defaced, and in despair  
 We lift imploring hands, and the loud cry

Of Faustus breaks upon the haunted air :  
*I'll leap up to my God, who pulls me down ?*  
 Exiled from peace, we neither live nor die !

Exiled from peace ! and thought and book are vain,  
 The ancient quarrel in the blood returns.  
 Round the dark house the low fields breathe in pain ;  
 Irrational and unassuageable grief  
 Touches the forehead with the falling leaf.  
 Yet, looking for cause, the spirit only learns  
 Tricks of the moonlight and impending rain,—  
 There's nothing but imagination here,  
 Personal sorrow and a thought-sick brain  
 That makes all subject to its private fear,  
 And would have all men sleepless because I  
 Endure this argument without relief,  
 This bitter quarrel between earth and sky !

*Two Poems By Lorna Reynolds*

WINTER MEDITATION

ENSKYING filaments of water wind  
 About the islanded soil of paths  
 That lead through trees, November-tranced,  
 Melancholy and half-lost  
 In aqueous shade, gaudery all vanished,  
 Save where a drooping bough still holds  
 Its flaunting wide-spread falling star.

Below, a world appears in  
 Feature similar, not double,  
 Strange Antipodes, where tangling  
 Branches rootless hang  
 In skies that spring beneath the feet,  
 Where wastes are heaped, tantalising  
 By hidden treasure, where, farther,  
 Land again discovered lies, beckoning forever  
 Onwards the questing voyager.

So I, unsteady Amphibian,  
 Swimingly walk, haltingly sail  
 Betwixt two worlds, secure in neither,  
 Not soldier, not sailor, not bold  
 To spear soft lovely fruits of earth,  
 Nor wholly to yield to dreams  
 Of phantom ships set for fabled gardens,  
 Where grow the white-bloomed Moly,  
 Flowers of Vervain and the Poppy,  
 Whose sleep is sweet—  
 But my soul, astray in life,  
 Wanders like a November ghost,  
 Through November trees, half-lost in shade.

## THE CYCLE

### I

As snake Winter's skin,  
 So I that I of yours  
 Must slough,  
 And you in pond of past delight  
 Must cast—  
 Lie still ; lie still ;  
 No ripple now ;  
 Your hour is done—  
 And I to Earth once more  
 Must be given,  
 Utterly shaken out to the Earth,  
 Flung wide in the winds,  
 Pressed to dark roots,  
 Forced wryly up strong trunks  
 To reach the day in bud and bloom  
 And green glistening leaf,  
 Returned to light,  
 Desiring light.

### II

I must be rendered up to Ocean,  
 Woven into that blue silken spread,  
 Passed over and rolled over,



Hurled along in roaring flood,  
 Plucked back by sucking ebb,  
 Utterly translated into that shining blue,  
 That wide shifting silken waste ;  
 Until I lie dry again,  
 A vessel, clean as bone,  
 Emptied even of the murmuring of the tides,  
 Desiring fullness,  
 Desiring fullness.

## THE CLOCKWORK NIGHTINGALE

*By Ewart Milne*

THE Emperor's artisan—I should know  
 About that bird in its gilded cage,  
 And how it pined, and the Emperor's rage,  
 For he held that he and the bird were bound  
 Each to each by his station. Still it pined.

' If I open the door with my clever knife,  
 And let it fly out, will it come back ? '  
 But then like a dawn attack  
 When I opened the door and out it flew  
 The sparrows and finches, a motley crew,

Dived on it screaming and pecked and pecked,  
 And soon it lay in the dust on its back  
 With its toes in the air stonedead,  
 Its blood on my head.  
 So I fashioned its twin with a clockwork inside

And slipped that into the cage.  
 It hummed and sang and nobody knew,  
 And nobody cared if each day or two  
 I wound the thing up. So nothing's changed—  
 'Cept the bird would be free. Dead and gone.

# THE SEVEN DAYS: A MEDITATION

By Arland Ussher

THE world, we are told, was created in seven "days"; and the seven-day Week still provides us, as the Month and the Season cannot do in separation (here all "morphological" historians seem to have gone astray), with the fundamental framework of all time and all existence. For in the cosmic Week the *diametric* square of Space, which is the circuit of the Moon, and the *dialectical* spiral of Time—that of the Sun—are united; the "intuitive" Time-wanderer boxes the spherical compass, and finds in the contemplative Heaven the Home from which the simple-impulsive Space-wanderer set forth. With a true instinct man has seen in century-long spans those Great Days of which each seven would appear—with no forcing of a fancy—coloured by its peculiar culture; if we consider the last 4,000 years (approximately)—as it were a single complete "Greater Day"—we count, in our own continuous Mediterranean civilisation—six of these cultures, these "Weeks" of man's spirit: the Egyptian, the Mycenean, the Greco-Roman, the Byzantine, the Latin-Christian, and the North European or Renaissance-Protestant. (It is true that the Mycenean Age—like that other very vital "Middle" Age, the Latin-Christian—is regarded as an age of violence and transition rather than of mature culture. But Homer and Dante alone are sufficient to imprint these periods with a special, epical, character). And now at the close of the great cycle, the practical or "solar" extrication of Christian man has nearly untied the knot which the theoretic "lunar" *intrication* of Classical man tied; the Actor whom two millennia drilled and set upon a world-stage, another two millennia have almost turned into the passive Beholder—a beholder still somnambulistically repeating scraps of played-out rôles. The man of Sense, who—like many a Don Juan—ended his search for attachments in the monastery, tied to the skirts of an abstract Good, has become the man of Passion, the Faust, drawn away from all fixities by an image of Beauty he never can embrace; the heroic Homeric Impulse, subdued to Reason by the late-Classical philosopher in similar manner as the earth holds its luminous satellite, has become conscious of its dependence on the ruler of the social-laborious Day, only in order that the

calendar-Duty of chivalry and Christendom might in turn discover the Protestant autonomous Will—the head, revolving its diurnal “good” and nocturnal “bad” courses, discover its burning axis, the heart—and man become again free and impulsive. It is Saturday afternoon, and the last week of our six weeks’ hire, and—like tired labourers who have taken their wages—we hasten to buy forgetfulness with our accumulated knowledge, for the moment heedless of that waiting long-awaited spouse, Wisdom, who would lead us home. . . . It will be noticed that we divide the “Greater Day” of (roughly) 4,000 years into six four-hour spans (or seven-day “Weeks”), for on the Seventh man rests from the travail of Time, and it would seem not to be numbered in any larger cycle than the 700 years. Following out our analogy, we find that man enters each historic span on the circuit of the capricious-physical Moon, and escapes its coil on that of the ideal-mental Sun; and during his journey he is subject to the old tutelary divinities of the Week, each in their turn. If on the Egyptian “Monday” he is a benighted and hallucinated dreamer, still haunted by the spectre-world of the Dead, he is on the Mycenaean “*Mardi*” the epic conqueror of Troy—the moon of sensual impulse waxes to the full, and drives men to the madness that fires their topless towers. On the late-Classical “*Mercredi*” Jove’s messenger, Reason, is supreme; the luminary that troubles humanity’s blood has suffered diminution—it looks down, somewhat mockingly as it wanes, on the star-scattered philosophisers of the Garden of Epicurus. Socrates, the wise sprite, he is not Zeus but Hermes—of earth earthy and of heaven heavenly, and passing urbanely between the two on the winged sandals of irony; across the Arabian wastes, another noble sage is teaching rationalism to the East. On “*Jeudi*” day is breaking, and the psychic firmament is full of portents; man, at first a morn-caught ghost—a life-weary solipsist, washing his hands of the world’s guilt—soon turns in his tracks to follow the new, more radiant, light-giver. The mighty Jupiter has arisen in person following his mortal incarnation—no more as a bull or swan as in the old wives’ fables of the night, but as a real and suffering human being—Reason in its last phase has had intuition of Reason’s final End, and under that shock the body is broken and nature is convulsed; Byzantium collects and fixes the glittering fragments of the tragedy, as if to crystallise for eternity man’s greatest instant. An Egyptian rigidity of art



and ritual has returned—men are still under the spell of a great change, and fearful, as it were, to draw breath ; only Mahomet—a belated Alexander reversing Alexander's Eastward drive—attempts to beat back the rising Sun into a Crescent. On "*Vendredi*" we are in the full dark of a moonless mindless nature, the bright noonday of the supernaturally-mediated Law ; it is the Day of the deified Weak Sex, the tourney and "romance"—a diviner Helen draws the fighting-men to the Levantine marriage-bed of cultures. All that had been despised and functional becomes ideal : poverty, the attribute of the plebs ; obedience, the attribute of the wife ; chastity, the attribute of the child. Love and war, work and prayer, are harnessed tandem-wise to the Roman Apollo's-chariot ; nations and classes are thrown off, as it were, like planets from the world-irradiating sun. *Men*, as men never were before—hot but dutiful, virile but devout—arise at the feet of the Celestial Woman ; it is the "Good Friday" of fasts—Reason is helplessly nailed to the Ideal mast that Action may be foolish, bold and happy. Here we reach the end of the patron-deities of the Latin week, for Rome could see (and still sees) no further ; as the Germanic Pagans, who had no worthy conception of a supreme God, gave the fourth day to Thor—a Titan-figure—the gnome-like ancient Woden being more Mercurial than Jovial in character. Saturday, whether the name be derived from Saturn the Titan and Time-father or Soeter the Teuton (if indeed the words are not the same), is the Day of the Teutons—that truly Titanic and Time-pregnant race ; the Day of the flaming sunset of the old era, and—beneath the horizon—the first faint moonrise of the new. Man, like the self-pivoted Earth, possesses—he has now begun to be aware—an inner core of fire, a private judgment and will ; the labourer has discovered his own strength, and—as his shadow lengthens—he often fancies himself taller than he is. As the sun-like Roman sceptre declines, the chaste spiritual brides—Church and Feudal System—go wanton, and turn into those monstrous expectant mothers, Protestantism and Democracy, like clouds transfused with the evening glow. The Ideal maskers, tired of going through the motions of a miracle-play, begin to flaunt their true face and character ; but at first—in the tremulous life-overflow of the *quattrocento*—the self-discovery is joyous as a love-escapade or an impromptu comedy, and in Sandro Botticelli the human spirit celebrates perhaps its highest, happiest, moment. Midway

through the epoch, Kant—an inverted Aristotle—knocks away the mind-forged manacles, and looses the *daimon* he fain would hold back ; as in an impressionist picture, persons and things in the end cease to be conceptual objects, and their outlines become dissolved by their utter *noumenal* particularity. Berkeley—a subjectivist still never doubting “commonsense”—makes the cosmòs his crystal ; the 20th Century subjectivist sees strange shapes in the crystal. The sword of intuitive perception is outwearing the sheath of reason and duty—is it fanciful to see a hint of the new Crescent in the sickle of Socialism ? The birth is at hand, the solar journey has led us—the few who down the centuries have truly divined and faithfully followed its course—to the new cradle ; the cradle not, this time, of God but of Man, not of the perfect Object but of the perfectly Seeing Subject, not of the One but of the elemental spirit of rich and ritually-elaborated variety which cannot be contained by a conceptual Oneness. The “genius” of the slow-moving Dynasties, of the shadow-realm of metaphysics and the magic of the non-human will return and play around our fevers ; but He will be found—like that other Child—among the groping beasts seeking their fodder, rather than among the brawling commercials and politicals in the inn.

## GEORGE MOORE AND SOME CORRESPONDENTS\*

*By J. M. Hone*

**T**ONKS was amongst Moore’s most favoured correspondents. The friendship was one of the first of Moore’s English friendships—it dated from the early days of the New English Art Club and Moore clung to it until his death in 1932. The first references in Moore’s autobiographical writings to the famous Slade professor and as yet insufficiently recognised artist, will be found in *Hail and Farewell*, where Tonks is praised as representative of the best kind of Englishman, because he shares (though in a less violent way) Moore’s dislike of the Boer War

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\* The letters are published with acknowledgments to Mr. C. D. Medley, Moore’s literary executor.



and the concentration camps. Tonks also "sat" for a photograph in the much later *Conversations in Ebury Street*, and came out very well. "No gay hedonist, the most casual observer would say, on meeting him in the street. A schoolmaster would perhaps be the choice of the passer-by, or a doctor, for none puts off the livery he has once worn, not entirely. A schoolmaster! There is nothing to be ashamed of. Was not Arnold a schoolmaster, yet he was a beautiful English poet!"

*To Henry Tonks.*

4 UPPER ELY PLACE,  
DUBLIN.

*March 26th, '03.*

DEAR TONKS,

I am delighted with your drawings. No one alive can do such beautiful drawing as you. The spirit of the old masters seems to have revived in you, and without a suspicion of plagiarism. Others who do drawings imitate, sometimes one, sometimes another master. But the drawing that I chose is better than the drawing you chose to go along side of it. The large head although very good is not equal to the other, one is inspiration, the other is excellent work.

Now I wonder if you could choose another drawing for me. I should like to have a pair that would be equal or very nearly equal, though I doubt very much if you can find me a drawing that equals the one I chose. I should like to have two more drawings of yours, and if you ever do a drawing of a nude I should like to have it. A large red chalk drawing of a nude by you would be a delicious thing, but the idea must come to you. It must not be suggested by me. If you try to do it at my suggestion you will not do a good drawing.

Your picture in the Academy is the best thing there. It is really very beautiful. The woman on the left is perhaps a little too tall, but the picture is full of beautiful tone and colour. "The Orpens" are very clever but they do not mean much.

Sargent exhibits a nude which reminds me of a carriage repository, a varnished wheel that is just about to turn round or a sheet of plate glass, something very formal and uninteresting.

Good-bye. If I write any more I shall miss the post.

Always,

GEORGE MOORE.

Early in 1914 Moore visited Palestine for the purposes of his story, *The Brook Kerith*. The 'Mary Hunter' mentioned in the letter to Tonks written on the return voyage was Mrs. Charles Hunter the wife of a mine-owner and sister of Dame Ethel Smyth, the musician. J. E. Blanche says in his *Portraits of a Lifetime* that Moore "initiated her into the arts and literature." Mrs. Hunter filled her house in Essex with celebrated men of letters and artists—Moore was excluded from the visiting list for a time because of his attacks upon Henry James. 'An unforgettable woman', says Blanche, 'of whom many were jealous . . . she died in her eighties, as much a philosopher when she was poor as she was when her husband told her she would never be able to spend the fortune he was leaving her.'

*To Henry Tonks.*  
P. & O.S.N. Co.  
S.S.  
*Thursday*

MY DEAR TONKS,

Here is a letter to tell you that I am coming home, having achieved my mission, the details of which shall be related on arrival. I am without news of the Empire or myself—my book has been published, I suppose and you have looked into it for I told Heinemann to send you a copy. I am afraid that in the hurry and worry and the scurry of departure I overlooked Mary Hunter. If you see her excuse the omission and give her my love. In Paris a feeble adaptation of Elizabeth Cooper is being played and I shall stop to see it but it cannot be else than a grand black failure. I have met some Americans and have stories to tell you.

Always sincerely yours,  
GEORGE MOORE.

If you write send your letter to Hotel Brighton, Rue de Rivoli.

Moore turned for assistance to Richard Best, scholar in old Irish, when he was writing the tales in a *Story Teller's Holiday*.

*To Richard Best.*  
121 EBURY STREET,  
LONDON, S.W.

MY DEAR BEST,

I wrote to you yesterday and am writing again today, this time to ask you to add some information if any be available,

*April 5th, 1917.*

which I very much doubt, regarding the extent and the situation of the great forests that once existed in Ireland. My stories are told by a fern gatherer in Mayo and he believes them all to have taken place in Mayo, Mayo was once under trees I suppose. If you have ever read any bits of ancient landscape regarding the condition of the country at that time send them along I shall be able to make use of them.

I hope I shall be able to go over to Ireland sometime before the end of the month. May is the best month in Ireland, the weather will be warmer then.

Very sincerely yours,

GEORGE MOORE.

P.S.—Ambrose is the first name that fell to the monk and Angela the first that suggested itself as suitable to his accomplice in sin. But you may be able to suggest better names. My community contains six nuns, or rather five nuns and Reverend Mother.

Moore gave Best a copy of "The Brook Kerith" when he was in Dublin in the month of July, 1917, as he had caught him out in some grammatical error. Best got sciatica and was in bed when this letter came. But he sent him a list of about 60 faults of style!

*To Richard Best.*

121 EBURY STREET,  
LONDON, S.W.

MY DEAR BEST,

*August 16th, 1917.*

I suppose you have by this time read the whole of "The Brook Kerith" and have marked a number of passages and probably think with reason these might be revised. If you have done this will you let me have the list.

Yours very sincerely,

GEORGE MOORE.

*To Same.*

121 EBURY STREET,  
LONDON, S.W.

*October 11th, 1917.*

MY DEAR BEST,

I was sorry not to be able to write to you yesterday, for I was anxious that you should hear at once how distressed I was

on hearing from you of your painful illness ; sciatica is, I know, as painful a malady as any, and seven weeks is a long illness. Are you better ? You must be better or you could not write. Let me hear from you again as soon as you conveniently can.

Many thanks for the list you sent me, but I confess that if you had worked less effectually I should have been better able to cope with it. The number of passages to be reconsidered and revised fairly frightened me. I may say that I quaked when I looked down the list, and the thought that came into my mind was that if there is so much to correct the book is not worth correcting.

Now that I have finished " A Storyteller's Holiday ", it may be that I shall find courage to look through the pages and see what can be done. Here and in America " The Brook Kerith " was received as one of the most beautifully written books of modern times. I never thought it was ; it was written too quickly ; the whole writing of the book did not take more than fourteen or fifteen months and it should have taken two years, probably three. But I had no idea that so many faults could be discovered in it. Your list seems to have been compiled by John Horne Tooke ; his spirit seems to have awakened in you again.

I am sure that all your suggestions are arguable, and I am sure that you have pointed out a great many errors that might be corrected, but the list you have sent me is a terrifying one ; all the same I am much obliged to you for it, and hope one day to make use of it. When I asked you to mark the pages, believe me, I did not contemplate putting you to the trouble you appear to have taken.

Once more many thanks,

Yours sincerely,  
GEORGE MOORE.

The following letter has already appeared in print (*Henry Tonks*, Heinemann), but it has a peculiar interest, as an expression of the most sincere and lasting of Moore's literary convictions, and I reprint it here.

121 EBURY STREET,  
LONDON, S.W.

*December 28th, 1917.*

MY DEAR TONKS,

I am not certain that Christmas day was not the miserablest day of my life with the possible exception of the terrible week

that I spent at Windlestone. But a woman was not the cause of my sorrow on Christmas day. The misfortunes I brooded on were my country's and if I did not accept Mrs. Hunter's invitation to come to Hill for the new year it was from fear that my depression would have depressed you all.

So great was my melancholy that I could not have thrown it off if it had not been for Pater. Pater's 'Plato' carried me beyond this fleeting world into the world of permanence, for you know, of course, every school boy does, that he did not accept Heraclitus's theory of motion.

Philosophy is much better than religion as a consolation, and Pater was a philosopher an aesthete and an extraordinary musician. He wrote ten volumes, or it may have been eight; I have not counted them and everyone is written in the same style—the same beautiful continuity as we find in Greek sculpture. It seems to me that to have written these books is as wonderful a feat as was ever achieved in any of the arts. I cannot think of any musician to compare him with. Mozart is too giddy and Beethoven did not write sufficiently well. Pater's writing is always perfect and he would make the oldest ideas seem new with the perfection with which he tells them.

I have been to the Burlington Fine Arts and have brought away with me an enduring memory of a woman seated, drawn by Corot. The Degas's are a disgrace and Mensel was a wonderful artist, whose power of execution redeemed his somewhat poor vision. I liked the Claudes as well as any and I think of him as a great artist reflecting the light of old Greece. Tiopoli bored me; they are very wonderful but mere caligraphy. I wonder why you like them. A shallow facile fellow who if he had lived in this age would have done nothing at all. It is so easy to be great when you are born in a great age. Heavens! what great fellows we should have been if we had been born in 1490, 1470 for preference. But Pater! I can think of nothing but Pater now and it seems to me that he will always light up my life even in the darkest days. He will be a torch, a beacon. All other lights are vain lights, believe me, Tonks, including the greasy stinking tallow dip that your friend George Moore lights betimes.

The reference to his correspondent being in Italy gives the year of the next letter, as Tonks spent a holiday near Rome during



the summer of 1920. *The Lake*, to the proofs of which Moore here alludes, was reprinted in 1920.

*To Tonks.*

121 EBURY STREET,

August 14th (1920),

*Saturday.*

MY DEAR TONKS,

It was a delightful surprise to get your letter this afternoon and I thought of a passage in one of Seneca's letters to somebody called Lucullus. I should have welcomed a letter from Steer but that is not to be hoped for. I miss you both terribly you (plural) cannot be replaced for those who are without the asthetic sense are not our friends ; and then we have grown and flourished in the same astheticism. I doubt if there are four people in this world that suit each other's whims and aspirations better than Steer Tonks Harrison and your correspondent. Harrison like myself is alone in London and he came last night to lament your absence (plural). He and I are going to the Tate tomorrow and I'll show him your letter. On Monday I am going to Wales to spend a fortnight with Howard de Walden, a needed rest this fortnight will be, for I am weary as a writer is who has composed for nearly two years without a day off. I am taking away with me the proofs of "The Lake" and this will help away the time if the hours should daudle. The newspapers have made a fuss over Esther Waters but the journalist always thinks it necessary to drag in Madame Bovary, a book he has not read and if he has he remembers it but faintly. So much is convention and prejudice. For fifty years people thought that the poor old fellow down by Rouen wrote well because he bellowed unceasingly that writing was very difficult. Of course Esther Waters is to Madame Bovary what the sea is to a goose pond by the wayside, the sides baked and cracked by sun with a few feathers afloat in the thick greenish water. Of course if you ask me if Esther Waters is as good as Eugenie Grandet I say there is nothing like the père Grandet in literature. He is a great rock rising thousands of feet above all other rocks. I should have written stones. Pebbles would be an exaggeration. I write these things to you for you will understand and you see that I have nothing for the moment but my job to write about—you have the gardens to inspire your pen and pencil. But I wish you would do something

in oils. You are associated in my mind with oils rather than water—You speak of the physical discomfort and fear that it would prove irksome to me were I with you. If I knew as much Italian as you do I'd soon enlarge my vocabulary for speech is a necessity to me. I cannot enjoy in solitude like McCall.

As ever dear friend,

GEORGE MOORE.

*To Same.*

121 EBURY STREET

(no date).

MY DEAR TONKS,

A friend of mine brought me Colvin's Life of Keats. I spent some time looking into it, and I agree with you that whosoever undertakes to describe a man that has attracted attention by his intelligence is bound to relate his subject in such a way that the reader will recognize the man he is reading about as a man of talent. And the same law is over the painter who would paint the portrait of shall we say a poet. He is bound to find some trace of intelligence in the mask and if he can find none it is abundantly evident that nature did not intend him to paint the poet's portrait—

As ever,

GEORGE MOORE.

Moore's historical romance Ulick Soracha was another work for which he consulted Best's scholarship.

*To Richard Best.*

121 EBURY STREET,

LONDON, S.W. 1.,

28th November, 1923.

MY DEAR BEST,

All my memories of you are pleasant ones, so I suppose that is the reason why I long to see you in London. It may happen that I shall see you in Ireland, a place that I never intended to see again; but so vexatious and embarrassing is the river Shannon to me that I may have to go over to explore. Mr. Curtis has written me a couple of letters and I hope he will write me a third, and after the third I shan't want any more, I think. My difficulty is how to get two horsemen across the Shannon. There were no

bridges in the fourteenth century, but there was a ford at Killaloe, and the ride from Castle Carra to Killaloe is a long one; and having crossed the Shannon at Killaloe they would have to ride up many miles to reach Durrow, County West Meath, where the convent is. To discover that there are no fords higher up would not surprise me, for I remember now that that the Shannon after Athlone is little more than a string of lakes. I sailed over Lough Allen in the days of my youth and my memory of it is of a lake ten miles long. There is a ford, no doubt, somewhere by Carrick-on-Shannon, but then my travellers, if they crossed there, would have to ride south-west as far as they would have to ride north-east if they crossed at Killaloe. The river Shannon has made my story difficult. What a dreadful place, according to Mr. Curtis, Ireland was in the fourteenth century, the Scotch-Irish coming over, Bruce and company ravaging, burning, destroying, creating famine everywhere they went.

So Magee has left you and is in Wales. He wrote to me from Wales but I am afraid I have lost his letter, and rely upon you to forward the letter to him that should come to the National Library by the same post that brings you this one. My kind regards to your wife, and tell her that it will give me the greatest pleasure to see her and you in London.

As ever,

GEORGE MOORE.

*To Richard Best.*

121 EBURY STREET,

*Sunday [6 April, 1925]*

MY DEAR BEST,

If I come to Ireland this summer it will be to see you and Stephens and Curtis; I will not say there is nobody else in Dublin I wish to see—Bergin is a great scholar and I keep a pleasant memory of him. But I am writing to you now to ask if you would care to receive one or more of my books. Heinemann has published "Hail and Farewell" in two very handsome volumes thoroughly revised. I was favourably impressed whilst revising and somewhat shocked and pained by the looseness of the writing. The book is now all or nearly all in good English. Perhaps not equal to the English into which the Brook Kerith has passed. It was you who first called my attention to the casual writing

in the first edition so perhaps you would prefer the Brook, it being more intimately associated with yourself. If you do you will have to wait a while for the new edition; the corrections will take some time to make. Let me have a line from you. As ever GEORGE MOORE.

Ps.—I sent you a message by Curtis. I am afraid the tone of this letter is sad, Ireland produces a sad mood invariably in me.

It is unnecessary to recall Esposito, the musician, to Irish readers. Ireland was his adopted country for many years. He was a great favourite with Moore during the latter's residence in Dublin. Gooden, a former student under Tonks, engraved a frontispiece for *Ulick and Soracha*.

To Mrs. Best.

121 EBURY STREET,

September 7th [1926]

DEAR MRS. BEST.

It seems strange to find myself writing to you after all these years, but I am glad to write to you and the occasion is a happy one, our dear friend Esposito['s] portrait for which I enclose a cheque for five pounds. Tell the original that I often think of him. Of you too I often think and am still hoping to see you. Your husband eludes me, an eel is not more illusive. Tell him that I saw Gooden yesterday and that he promised to send me three prints of the fountain—one of these I shall have framed for my old friend Richard Best.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

GEORGE MOORE.

In 1930 George Moore was in his 79th year and stricken by many disabilities. Tonks, who had sometimes found him a trying friend, answered his appeal and continued to see him until his death. The play referred to in this letter is the *Passing of the Essenes*.

To Henry Tonks.

121 EBURY STREET,

S.W. 1.

MY DEAR TONKS,

4th September, 1930.

The interval that divides us has become so burdensome and so long that I can barely believe I am going to see you again, and I am writing to ask you to assure me I am mistaken. I

could fill up a page or two with a description of a very bad cold, but why write it? It was bad enough to have the cold for a fortnight—that couldn't be helped, but I can help describing my new doctor and the medicine he gave me. The stories I am writing do not please me overmuch, and they may end in the wastepaper basket. A wretched, miserable sinner this has been from every point of view. You must have been kept in the house day after day by the rain.

I get letters from the Arts Theatre and my play is announced for the first of October; but I'm afraid it won't be produced as soon as that. I ought to go to the rehearsals, but I will not, for if I went once I should have to go every day. The play will be published on the twentieth of this month, and if you would like to read it before seeing it I will send you a copy. But do write and tell me that time has not yet outworn our long friendship.

As ever,

GEORGE MOORE.

Fatally ill as he was in 1932, Moore continued to work during this last year of his life, and even finished a version of an (unpublished) novel *Madeleine de Lisle*. He died in January, 1933, at his Ebury Street address.

To Richard Best,  
121 EBURY STREET,  
LONDON, S.W. 1.

25/4/32.

MY DEAR BEST,

If you will turn to the last pages of the dedication of "Aphrodite in Aulis" you will read that my surgeon, Sir John Thomson Walker, warned me not to try to write until I recovered from Uraemia poisoning; Uraemia poisons the creative parts of the brain, so my surgeon said. I expostulated and he left me, and I tried every day to write and failed every day, week after week, month after month. It would have been wiser to have waited a few months longer for it was not until the beginning of the following year my mind strengthened and allowed me to concentrate on sentences. Your corrections are much more numerous in the first half of the book than in the end, and I



wonder how you were able to give as much time as you evidently have given to the task.

All this morning I was at work with my secretary considering, accepting and rewriting paragraphs, for there was a deal that shocked me. The book in the main pleased me ; it is very prettily written, which is strange, for it is very negligently written too !

I cannot write more now for I feel so tired it almost seems as if my enemy Uraemia had settled upon me once more. I will write again tomorrow ; I thank you.

Yours very sincerely,

GEORGE MOORE,

p.p. E. P.

P.S.—Mr. Moore has told me to say he is too tired to sign this letter.

## THE STORY OF A NOSEGAY

*By Robert Herbert*

ONE of the most sensational civil actions, ever to come before the Munster Circuit, was that of Bruce *versus* Grady, tried at Limerick in the summer assizes of 1816. It arose from a libel against Bruce by Grady in his now famous satirical poem, "The Nosegay."

Tom Grady, of Belmont, Castleconnell, was a member of the Irish Bar, an accomplished scholar, and a man of no mean mental qualities. An infirmity of sight compelled him to use glasses, by no means as common in those days as they are now, and he was known at the Bar as Spectacles Grady to distinguish him from his cousin, Harry Dean Grady. Gifted and ambitious he had hoped to win fame and fortune at his profession, but his talent for satire, which he never attempted to control, quite ruined him, and he never attained any reputation more profitable than that of a wit in the law courts. In the words of Tom Goold, another member of the Munster Circuit, "No one but Tom Grady could have ruined Tom Grady."

Grady was one of the few Irish barristers who spoke in favour of the Union, and part of his speech has been recorded by Sir Jonah Barrington:—"The Irish are only the rump of an

aristocracy. Shall I visit posterity with a system of war, pestilence and famine? No. Give me a Union. United with that country where all is peace, order and prosperity. Without a Union we shall see embryo chief justices, attorney-generals in perspective, and animalcula sergeants." It is said that for his speech on this occasion, Lord Clare made him a County Judge worth £600 per annum. Later in life he was appointed Postmaster of Limerick.

An unhappy marriage soured his outlook on life and Grady retired from the Bar and became "an exile from society in his own house." His whole nature changed. The wit and soul of the convivial dinners of the Castleconnell district became a recluse and an unpleasant misanthrope, at feud with his own family and the world in general. Martial, Sterne, Rabelais, Swift and Churchill were his favourite authors. From them he learned how to wound those he hated—and never did pupil learn better. Possessed of a delicate poetical fancy, he seldom or never wrote in a tender or ennobling mood. His pen was as merciless as a scalping knife, as deadly as a poisoned arrow, as ruthless as the scythe of time, and as polished and as elegant as it was strong and incisive. It pleased the classical tastes of Grattan, the whimsical outlook of Curran, the delicate fancy of Moore and the oratorical mind of O'Connell. His satires were always aimed at whatever was corrupt and dishonest in life and before meeting with Bruce he had already satirized his fellow-members of the Bar, in "The Barrister," and his next-door neighbour, Lady Clare, in "The Flesh-brush." But in Bruce the banker he found such a perfect model, that he never ventured further.

George Evans Bruce came of a County Cork family. He was of a moral deformity and hideousness that made him a monster. The number and nature of his crimes would have been beyond belief, had they not been sworn to by men of unimpeachable character in the courts of justice. His career opens in London where he married a rich and handsome woman and entered fashionable circles there. But one night at Miles's Club, where play ran very deep, he was caught cheating and expelled. He fled to France to hide his own unsavoury reputation and is said to have won over £90,000 gambling during his two years sojourn there.

He returned to Ireland in 1789 and, purchasing the estate of Hermitage in Castleconnell, he settled down as a country

gentleman. To establish himself he persuaded Crosbie Morgell, High Sheriff of the county, of whom Lord Redesdale had said "I think Crosbie Morgell cheats everybody," to appoint him to the Grand Jury; but when he entered the Jury Box, most of the other jurors left it, and Bruce was so mortified that he did not attempt to enter it again for seven years.

He lived close to Lord Clare, and his next venture was to intrigue with the latter to be put in the commission of the peace. Clare, knowing his reputation too well, was unwilling, and Bruce's method of persuasion was to buy a printing press and issue seditious pamphlets inciting the poor to revolt. Some whom he had incited to resist a royal proclamation were hanged, but Bruce won the day and Lord Clare made him a magistrate. He was then so officious in hunting down persons whom his own pamphlets had caused to revolt that Clare made him High Sheriff of the County and held out to him hopes of a baronetage. To those who expostulated, Clare excused himself on the grounds that his action had made a loyal man of a rebel.

In spite of all his patronage by Clare, the Limerick gentry refused to associate with him because, having forced himself on their society he broke its most sacred laws. He ill-treated his wife. He lived with his sister-in-law and had a son by her. He affected to be an athiest and spoke publicly of divine subjects with ribaldry. He encouraged the young men of property in the county to gamble or worse. He betrayed the secrets of the jury room. He changed his mistresses as often as his clothes. He acted as pimp to Lord Headford in the seduction of the wife of the Reverend Mr. Massy; and in the action for £20,000 damages which followed, he gave evidence that Mrs. Massy had co-operated willingly in the affair. It seems almost incredible that one man could have committed so many crimes and be still at large; but commit them he did, and a jury of his own countrymen believed him fully guilty of them.

In 1806, when Furnell's Bank in Limerick collapsed and its owner committed suicide, Bruce saw his opportunity and opened a bank there. He soon had most of his enemies in his power by the judicious issuing of loans, and then forced on them his company which they would otherwise have sedulously avoided. In 1813, he founded the Limerick County Club and was on the high road to social success when he fell foul of Tom Grady, and never recovered from the biting satire which Grady wrote on him.

In 1790 he took an action for libel against William Frewen who had called him "a rebel, a white-boy, a black-legs, a swindler and a knave." The jury awarded him sixpence damages instead of the £5,000 he claimed, and Tom Grady, who was acting for the defendant, handed him one shilling after the trial and demanded his change. Even in banking Bruce was dishonest and in 1808 he was convicted of charging usurious interest on money lent, and fined £1,500.

In 1810 he lent Tom Grady £1,300 on excellent security, but in 1812, as the result of a quarrel, he suddenly and uncivilly demanded it back. Grady at once repaid the loan, but bitter things were said in the process and the two men quarrelled. Bruce was the first to put the quarrel on paper. He circulated anonymous letters in which the character of Grady was assailed, and finally printed a foul lampoon in which Grady was charged with robbing the Post Office and murdering his nephew. There was no doubt as to who had published the lampoon, but when Grady endeavoured to bring Bruce to justice, he found the printer, one Monk, had fled to England, and the libel could not be brought home to Bruce. His revenge then took the form of a satirical poem, entitled "The Nosegay." He put his name on the title-page and there could be no mistaking the subject of the poem. It created an immense sensation and the whole first edition was sold out within a week. Bruce immediately instituted proceedings but, nothing daunted, Grady issued a second edition. This time, to make sure there would be no mistaking Bruce, he had a caricature of him drawn by Brocas and inserted in the book. With half-closed eye and hanging tongue the portrait of Bruce, which was said to be an extremely good likeness, had a most repulsive look, all the ugliness, cunning and sensuality being considerably heightened. The other prints in the book show Bruce cheating at cards, being hunted away by Nelly Cusack, a peasant girl whose virtue he had assailed, and alone with his terrible dreams at night. The frontispiece was an excellent portrait of Grady, complete with his "spectacles."

The poem was most inappropriately dedicated to Thomas Moore for it contains passages of the most savage satire ever written by an Irishman. In style it is worthy of Pope, Dryden, or Swift, and in venom, violence and savagery, it exceeds even these writers. It supposes a court of Justice before which Bruce is arraigned for his crimes, and begins :—



Come Bruce, for tardy justice takes her seat  
 Convicted usurer ! convicted cheat !  
 In every mischief, actor and abettor,  
 Self-vaunted infidel, and tampering traitor,  
 In daring prim, in principles unbuckled ;  
 Reluctant subject ! voluntary cuckold !  
 Thou foul polluter of thy sister's bed !  
 Fraud, usury, incest, treason on this head !  
 Of crime a climax—or Pandora's box,  
 Which every precious gem of hell unlocks.  
 One eye half-closed—half out thy slaver's tongue,  
 Thy twisted nose from nature's post half wrung,  
 Cadaverous cheek, and mischief-making grin,  
 Emblem and offspring both of death and sin ;  
 Come into court—thy fiery trial dare,  
 And hold thy hand up at the public bar.

The poem proceeds to catalogue, with graphic force, Bruce's crime's against mankind, and the crowd of witnesses assembled to prove them :—

See, round the court, of youths debauch'd, a group.  
 Who sucked thy poisons, while they supped thy soup,  
 Who haunt thy dinners, emulous to share  
 Thy half-digested extracts from Voltaire . . .

See on one side some minors—ruined boys  
 Whose lands you've mortgaged to sustain those joys ;  
 Who pay, for nights in those sad vigils spent,  
 A mild retributive of cent. per cent. . . .

See in the Court, their heads o'erspread with dust,  
 A group of victims of thy loveless lust,  
 First purchased, then debauched, and next forlorn  
 Of comfort, raiment and subsistence shorn ;  
 By misery chastened, and by conscience flayed,  
 By forced abortions, withered and decayed . . .

But see aloft, and near the sheriff's box,  
 The black browed spectre of poor Charles Fox ;  
 See, with one hand his angry eyes he rubs,  
 And in the other holds—the five of clubs ;



While on his front, in burning letters shines,  
Thy wealth and infamy, the game of Quinze. . . .

See, round the court some glibbering phantoms glide,  
By thee to treason urged, who traitors died.  
Can none remember when, in ninety four,  
High Treason's standard through the State you bore.  
At every post thy daring theme rehearsed,  
And manifestoes through the crowd dispersed;  
And while sedition round your horses smoked,  
Your hoarse harsh voice like horrid raven croaked . . .

See, round the court, in frightful mystery tread  
The incestuous offspring of thy incestuous bed;  
What will you call each mystical homuncle?  
Its father are you, or are you its uncle?  
How shall we name this medley of creation,  
This tangled web, this labyrinth of relation,  
This family pie, hodge-podge incestuation?

The final arraignment is as terrible as anything in the poem; and the special plea by which Bruce is spared his life—because twelve of his peers cannot be found to try him—brings this vitriolic satire to an abrupt conclusion:—

Bruce I arraign thee on no moderate plan,  
The blasted enemy of God and Man;  
Of God, whose majesty you make your sport,  
And coarse and vulgar blasphemies support,  
With stupid arguments and impious pride,  
His Son reviled, derided and denied.

Who clothes the earth? who formed the immortal soul?  
Who shaped the concave and who fixed the pole?  
Whose hands the winds, the waves the lightning guide?  
Who steers the planets and who stems the tide?  
And thou, the vilest of his worms on earth,  
Deny his essence and deride his worth,  
And, sedulous of mischief, choose the time,  
To plant the seed, and propagate the crime . . .

Thus far the foe of God—now let me scan,  
How stands the dread account twixt thee and man?

Is there one evil word you have not spoken?  
Is there one human tie you have not broken?  
Is there one vice a stain to moral reason?  
Is there one crime from swindling up to treason?  
Produce the catalogue, and let me hear  
Even one exception in your black career.  
Or take the decalogue and read it through,  
Is there one line inviolate by you?  
Is there, through all this wilderness of doom,  
One virtue found to glimmer o'er the gloom?  
You have not Prudence—your whole life's a folly,  
And Justice blushes when her Courts you sully,  
Temperance you haven't—rash, vindictive, froward,  
And Fortitude disclaims thee for a coward. . . .

By Magna Carta, as the law appears,  
You must be tried by twelve men of your peers;  
But if none such, why then you may defy all,  
Elude grim Justice, and refuse a trial.  
My Lords, how say you? Is not this the law?  
The Law is so—you've saved him by a flaw;  
The objection's fatal, and, howe'er depraved,  
For want of peers, the culprit's life is saved.

This poem is, undoubtedly, the greatest poetical satire in the whole history of Anglo-Irish literature; and not only for the modest reason given by the author himself in his dedication of the poem to Tom Moore:—"if I have any merit in the execution of my picture, it is entirely to be attributed to having for a long time minutely considered and deeply studied my original." Grady had a powerful control of English, and had his gifts only been attracted towards a less loathsome subject, or if only they had been aimed at his victims in a less personal way, he would vie to-day with the greatest satirists the world has ever known.

Bruce laid his damages at £20,000 and the trial took place in Limerick. Tom Grady briefed O'Connell, then at the peak of his legal career, Burton who afterwards became a famous judge, O'Regan, the friend and biographer of Curran, and two

other counsellors. Tom Goold, Pennefeather and Jackson stood for Bruce, and Mr. Serjeant Johnson and a jury of County Limerick men tried the case. O'Connell's speech on the occasion was a memorable one. "I shall follow him," he said, "from his first ill-omened dawn above the horizon until I show him culminating in his meridian, and emitting thick pestilential flashes through the darkness that envelopes his western career . . . , "while Burton referred to him as "affrighted by his own hideousness, rushing for relief upon society, and by horrified society thrown back upon himself." Even Goold, Bruce's own Counsel, seemed to take pleasure in reading out for the court, in a most spectacular manner, the most virulent passages in the satire, and kept the Court amused by reading Grady's letters to Brocas (giving him a description of the banker so that he might draw a fair likeness of him). Not one single County Limerick gentleman came forward to vouch for Bruce's character, and no effort was made to bring in witnesses who could have denied a single charge made by Grady in the "Nosegay." We cannot therefore help feeling that every charge was true, and that George Evans Bruce was the most blatant blackguard that ever foisted himself on Irish society.

The Jury returned a verdict for £500, one fortieth part of the sum claimed, and Grady's comment was :—"The charges in the Nosegay ranged from swindling up to treason and were in number up to forty. Possibly the jury considered that thirty-nine out of the forty were established in quality though not in specie, as they gave the plaintiff precisely the fortieth part of the sum he demanded." The remains of the second edition of the Nosegay were destroyed, and Bruce immediately bought up two reports of the trial. But Grady was not to be beaten and published one himself, with a scathing preface in which he taunted Bruce with the failure of his action. However the costs of the trial broke him and he fled to France to avoid paying the damages awarded. Here he remained, living and dying in obscurity, and depriving Ireland at once of a scourge, and of a genius !

# THE WAYWARD SCHOLAR'S TRUANT MIND

*By Hugh Connell*

**I**F the teacher was antipathetic to Myles, there was some excuse for him, for he was the thirteen-year-old at his least attractive stage, and the added check of transplanting from urban England to rural Ireland had made him coil himself more tightly than ever into an impenetrable hedgehog of a child, all the more exasperating for the hint of something worth-while inside. The teacher was quite shrewd enough to know this, and it was silly of him to point out Myles, colourless and unresponsive, as the typical Anglo-saxon, much as if he were to pick up a flint and compare its dull exterior to a piece of Irish granite. He must have known that to tax him with having the brains of a hen and to call him a goat the same morning for taking a more modern view on a moot point, was inept.

"Well, if he wants nothing but baa-sheep in his school, he's welcome," said Myles to himself—and set off to explore the leafy roads of South Leinster on a fine afternoon in June, knowing nothing of them beyond the triangle between his grandfather's farm, the school and the chapel. Dorothy, his jolly popular little sister, joined him enthusiastically, but the doctor waylaid her in Glasslin post-office sending a thoughtful postcard to her Grannie to say they were off to Dublin, and it seemed politic as well as pleasant to accept a drive in a car and lie low about Myles. He agreed afterwards that she was right, but the sight of her radiant face as she sailed past the hedge where he lay in hiding, chatting nineteen to the dozen with the kindly old doctor (who loved her faint cockney accent) gave him another small grievance to brood on. In one way he was to the good—he had her surplus lunch now as well as his own.

Myles walked on, making vaguely for that Tim . . . something where the Dublin 'bus passed, wondering how far his couple of shillings would take him and what he would do when they were gone. Some lucky chance might as well happen to him as to other people and waft him over to England. Was he so sure that he wanted to go back to that tottering home, or of the welcome his pre-occupied parents would give him when he walked in? Would he even know where to find them?

That line of thought having petered out, the green lonely country walked in and took possession of the vacant mind. Leaves on the trees, grass-blades, road-side weeds, all in their first freshness, small streams hidden under screens of flag-iris, all were astir and sparkling softly under the muted light. The sun dropped leisurely down the last pallid section of sky. For a long time its setting made no difference, but by degrees an ambient brightness replaced the sparkle and bird-song ceased.

Though Myles was getting drowsy, his legs were going like clock-work. It was a long time since he had seen a house or hay-barn; some while ago some young cyclists had greeted him, off to a dance perhaps, in genial mood. Now it was very still—as still as . . . being in bed with your head under the blanket. That would be dark and stuffy, this was cool and bright. He was walking into a new world—why need he stop?

Presently he found himself in conversation with a goat. Not exactly; the goat was talking over his head to someone with a voice that either ran spasmodically up and down the scale, or spat out gurgly monosyllables. Out of the corner of his eye he saw two large feet, a thick square body with gesticulating arms, and, level with his head, a full supple feathery neck and two fine wattles. What fowl? It over-topped him so much that he found it hard to see, but from its conversation he guessed it to be a cock. No hen could have been so dogmatic and self-assured. (Just the sort of generalization that Teacher would have made. Still, it *was* a cock).

"Little fool" it said, "Out so late and no idea where to roost."

They spoke old Gaelic, but as Myles knew what was in their minds before the words came out of mouth or bill, it didn't matter.

"Humans are stupid," said the goat. "Now I've been observing them off and on for eleven hundred years, and they never seem to know what they really want. Some pull one way and some another and when at last they've got going in the same direction and you think something grand is just over the hill, then they meet a boggy . . ." a pause while it helped itself to a few sprigs of woodbine—"and rush off in a panic without waiting to see if there is any harm in it. And when they *do* find something good they either eat it all down so that it dies or start quarrelling and trample and break it."

"Look look look!" said the cock, suddenly addressing



Myles directly, "look at Moon-shee's palace! Make Dolly chuckle, eh? Fairy Palace? Pooh! Monument to fools who can't see beyond their own bills."

Myles stopped and looked and sat down on a bank and went on looking while the goat and the cock faded away. The little white road was curving and dipping to an arched bridge over a stream; bending leftwards beyond the bridge it disappeared behind a knoll of high dark trees and bushes. Facing him across the reed-fringed stream and facing the pure pallor of the afterglow, was a white-walled castle elegantly battlemented and pierced with gothic windows. On the hither side was an open grassy space, and the wind turned back the foliage of a great sycamore so that it was pearl-grey against the pearl-grey walls.

Honk! A homely little Ford snuffled round the corner, tearing up the dusk and the silence. Myles swore at it quite unjustly. He knew then that he was tired, and crossing the bridge he clambered up the bank into the knoll. There, under a fragment of ivy-crested wall, he finished his last crust, curled up on the dry leaves, and slept. As he dropped off he saw clearly for the first and last time, the two noble countenances of his companions, wise and remotely kind.

A few hours later the before-dawn chill woke him, and he thought he would walk away to warm himself. There was a low bright moon, and missing the track down to the road, he strayed around in a maze of bushes and boulders, perhaps tombstones. He did not mind them; his family did not see ghosts.

But he was startled and puzzled by something high and white that kept peering at him over the bushes. Then, rounding a holly, his phlegm was routed by the sight of an immensely high slender Celtic cross, floodlit by the moon against a black wall of ivy. Gaunt and sparkling, its surface was delicately dappled by the bas-reliefs with which it was covered; it was simple, subtle, magnificent.

Myles' contacts with Celtic crosses had been confined to covers of writing-blocks, a school-book illustration, and perhaps one or two concrete degenerates in Glaslin Cemetery—if he ever noticed them. He was genuinely awestruck at first; then getting hold of his critical young self again, he decided that he did like it better than the War Memorial at home, of which it reminded him. He walked up and looked at the queer carvings that covered shaft and pedestal. The figure on the cross was

too worn and rude to mean anything to him, but there was plenty of fun to be got out of the Noah's Ark men and beasts on the two facets lit by the moon.

Suddenly, like the man confronted with an Infant Crocodile, he ran. In and out through stones and bushes, down the bank, over the bridge and back up the little white road, till he could run no more and dropped to a walk. Things stopped being queer; he enjoyed the birds shouting out of dark hedges, and the one gold bar of a grey sunrise, and the friendly dog he could try his rusty voice on, and the sleep in his grandfather's hay before breakfast. And nobody, not even Dorothy, asked him awkward questions. His elders thought him rather less cock-sure than he had been, and that was to the good.

Five years later the little white road saw Myles again; in a car this time, with his best girl, his sister and her best boy of the moment.

"Yes, here it is, just at the turn—a really top-ranking old castle."

Picturesque, certainly but nothing to come five miles down a by-road for. Why did Myles call it a castle? It was just a derelict mill dressed up with whitewash and battlements. Joyce, cheerful and sensible, threw him a glance and withheld the banter that was meant to go with it—it would have been waste of ammunition, since the target was not there.

"What was it the Cock said? 'Monument to fools who can't see beyond their own bills'? Quite sound history for either a millenarian cock or a thirteen-year-old boy. Will I ever unravel that tangle?"

Anxiously, for fear that too should play his memory of it false, he brought them up the little path to the cross. But that was voted quite worth the cost in time and petrol. Everyone was charmed with the quaintness of the granite picture-book, and there were delighted cries as ingenious interpretations were found for sundry scenes and figures. Suddenly it struck Joyce that Myles had "gone away" again, and was sitting down a little way off, staring now at the cross, now at a note-book in his hand, with a tense expression. She said nothing, but wondered. Would a man with dark patches in him make a comfortable companion for life? She was all for—what was it? brightness and light?—dispensing it herself generously and with

discretion. When she presently found another best boy, a wonderful double-blue gold-medallist fellow, Myles wished her joy without surprise or resentment—at least, no more resentment than he had felt over Dorothy's defection years ago. She also was justified. A man had no right to allow himself to be so much upset by fancies as to funk taking the wheel of a car. By good luck he had the cure or charm he needed to hand, and no one else guessed at the tempest that swept through his mind.

Years later he put a rare touch of autobiography into a book of essays. "When I was a lad I met truth apparently masquerading as a lie, and it frightened me so much I took to my heels." After describing the colloquy between the grotesque beasts he says, "On the moonlit shaft of the Cross I found them, talking away over my head. No wonder I, brought up in the scientific tradition, thought the sooner I was out of such a crazy place the better. But it was a thousand times worse to come back, thinking myself an exceptionally sane and sensible young man, to be laughed at, first of all as an arrant spinner of tales, and then to see a picture of myself being devoured by some horrible creatures, swine or wolves or just hell-hounds. The shadow hid it on my first visit, but the figure was plainly meant to be the same in both panels. I felt bad in every way, angry, guilty, overwhelmed. And then queer beasts on other panels came back to me, and reminded me of a snatch of verse I had copied into my note-book, picked up somewhere in the course of reading during the last term. The woman who wrote it might have known the sculptor of the cross as far as time went, though one was German and the other Irish. I sat down and read it and looked at the cross, and then I felt fit to drive the car again.

Those hounds may get me down yet. I will give my translation of the verse, and have that at least to my credit.

"See how she comes climbing up, she the soul who once wounded me—

She has thrust aside the Ape of the World,  
She has overcome the Bear of Lust,  
She has trampled down the Lion of Pride,  
She has torn the jaws of the Wolf of Greed asunder,  
She comes running now like a hunted deer, in search of the  
Springing Well that is I.  
She comes soaring up like an Eagle from the Abyss to  
High Heaven."

# THE SPIDER

*By George Manning-Sanders*

THE widow was idly basking in the autumn morning sunshine, watching the unerring and rapid movements of a spider weaving its web between the empty rain-water barrel and the wall of the cottage.

When the web was finished, the widow heaved a sigh that shook her double chins and rippled her massive bulk. How easy it was for the spider to decoy victims and satisfy its need ; and how difficult for her, with winter coming, savings nearly spent, a quarter's rent owing, and still some years before she could claim an old age-pension !

From the few huddled cottages of the fishing hamlet down below, a man moved slowly up the zig-zag path that was a short cut from the cove to the village on the high road. The widow recognised the man by his long, drooping moustache and his shambling figure as old Peter. And what was Peter doing garbed in his best clothes on a week day, when he should be away at sea, fishing ? Forty years ago the prosperous Peter had buzzed into a net woven by the sly, miserly Prudence. They owned the place they lived in, and had money in the bank.

Just when old Peter was passing the little white gate that led in from the stony hillside to her neglected patch of garden, the inquisitive widow called strongly.

"How's things, then, Peter ?"

Peter paused, as if he were trying to remember something, shook his head to set his moustache swinging, leant his elbows on the little white gate, and answered mournfully.

"Bad—bad as can be."

"What way bad, then ?" said the widow, with urgent curiosity.

"My Prudence took sudden," said Peter in a muffled voice.

"Gone dead ?" The amazed widow could scarcely speak.

"Aye, two hours ago, without a word. Sudden as that !" Peter gave a single clap of his great hands to startle the sea gulls and set them screaming.

This was news indeed ! The widow got up and waddled to the gate. When she was satisfied with all the details reluctantly given by the bereaved husband, she said warmly :



"Well, there it is, and fretting won't bring her back. Come your ways in, and I'll brew you a cup of tea."

"Thank you all the same, ma'am, but I'm on me way up to vicar for to tell him about the job, so that everything can be done right and proper for Prudence's burying."

"A cup of warm tea will put strength into your guts."

"I had a cup first thing, but I could do with another." And Peter's great skinny hand raised the latch of the little gate, and with loose, shambling strides he followed his hostess into the cottage.

There were identical wooden arm chairs, one on either side of the cheerfully blazing range. The widow moved all the cushions into one chair, and Peter relaxed into it.

"Prudence never wasted no words on me," said she, heaping tea into a brown pot with a liberal hand.

"Or on no one else, come to that. A good wife keeps herself to herself, same as Prudence done all those forty years that she scrimped for to save up money that she'll never now share in the spending."

"A saver was she?" said the widow, and added a further heaped spoonful of tea to the pot.

"Aye, that she was. So here I be lonesome, with money and gear in plenty."

"You must keep your chin up," said the widow, and she took a hand from the brown tea pot to pat his scraggy neck. He raised a hand to lay it on the same spot, pondering on what had made her touch so agreeable. And he continued to ponder till a black steaming cup of tea was at his elbow.

"What about a drop of gin in it?" said the widow, waddling to a cupboard.

"No, ma'am, no—I never touch the costly old stuff."

"Then you'll have no objections to me trying a nip? News like of this is very sudden, and upsetting to the stomach."

"Look here, me knees is all of a tremble!" said Peter, and held out his great hands for inspection.

The widow, ostentatiously smacking her lips and closing her eyes as she sipped the spiritous tea, said: "Yes, and you'll be worse before you're better."

"I can't hardly believe she's gone," said Peter breaking the silence.



"The sprawl's gone out from you, and here's what'll put it back." With her plump, naked elbow the widow slid the little bottle of gin across the table till it tinkled against his saucer.

"I wouldn't have had this happen to her, not for a five pun' note," said Peter, as he stirred a few drops of the spirit into his thickly sugared tea.

"That's no way to handle physic!" said the widow, flashing the bottle over his cup.

"If Prudence saw me, she'd never believe it," he said, sipping cautiously.

"Prudence knows better on a lot of things, now she's gone to where she is."

"With the angels, for sure," said Peter.

"You was lucky to have kept her so long," said the widow, and stifled a hiccough.

"She was a comfortable woman, and never no gadder," said Peter, tilting the empty cup over his nose.

"And my man could make a shilling where others would starve," continued the inspired widow. "He left me very snug; and he said the only reason why he didn't want to go was because he'd miss my tasty cooking. And I'll prove his words true, if you'll step in on the way down from fixing your job up with vicar."

"I will then," said Peter, "for things down yonder in my place is very so-so, with neighbours crowding and cackling."

"When a man's deeply stricken, he don't enjoy company, unless it's just one that has bin through it all herself."

"The sooner I go, the sooner it will be over, and I'll be back again," said Peter, beginning to rise from his chair.

"Don't fret yourself to haste," said the widow blandly. "I was never one to watch the clock. I believe in giving a man his freedom. What's a oven for but to keep food warm against the time when your appetite's driven you indoors?"

The widow conducted her visitor to the little white gate. She commented on the weedy garden, and the profit that might be made from its cultivation. She smiled and nodded in agreement with all that Peter said. She waved her plump hand to him when he reached the brow of the hillside and stood forlornly silhouetted against the bright sky.

Then, with renewed interest, she went to see if the diligent spider had lured a victim into the skilfully contrived web.

# STANDISH JAMES O'GRADY

By Austin Clarke

"I KNEW Sir Samuel Ferguson and was often his guest, but only knew him as a kind, courteous and hospitable gentleman: no one ever told me that he was a great Irish poet." So Standish James O'Grady wrote in an autobiographical fragment entitled *A Wet Day*, which was published in the *Irish Homestead* in 1899. At the time when he met the epic poet, O'Grady was a young Trinity graduate and barrister. He, too, was destined to work without sympathy or recognition, completely unknown to the critics of Victorian England, a hidden pioneer in our own Dark Age. His discovery that Ireland had a remote past was sudden and due to chance. While staying with some friends in the West of Ireland, he happened, on a wet day, to take a book from the library shelves and glance idly through its pages. The book was O'Halloran's *History of Ireland*, and soon he began to turn the pages in fascinated wonder. The imaginative conversion of O'Grady was so remarkable that we may suspect the ancient bardic associations of his family were astir instinctively in his mind.

It is largely due to the enthusiasm and unfailing patience of A.E. that Standish James O'Grady, during the later years of his life, was recognised as the "Father of the Irish literary revival." He was born in Castletown, Berehaven, in the year 1846, but it is significant that the centenary of his birth should have passed unnoticed and that no public tribute has been paid to his name. We live, however, in an unsatisfactory transitional period, when the traditions of our literary movement are threatened by a new ignorance. Our writers are regarded with suspicion and move within the increasing shadow of censorship. The problem of bilingualism is completely misunderstood by our statesmen and politicians. In Belgium, for instance, the literary revival both in Flemish and French was undivided and reached the same high standard of excellence. Here our aims are divided and the official indifference towards our poetry, drama and prose in the English language amounts almost to a boycott. The Tailteann awards have been abandoned, the verse plays of Yeats have vanished from the Abbey Theatre. Plentiful grants are given to

every effort in the Gaelic language. As our elderly politicians descend towards the grave, their efforts to save the Gaelic language become more frantic. They work with bill, tax and impatience ; and once more we witness the last " delirium of the brave."

Many of us, when we were starting to write, had heard only vaguely of Standish James O'Grady, and he was little more to us than a shadowy figure surviving from the past. We knew that he had been living for many years in complete retirement in the Isle of Wight, and had been granted one of those small Civil List pensions which the British Government gives with mocking hand. There were rumours, too, that he had outlived his own enthusiasm and had forgotten the epic imagination of his early years. Most of his books had never been republished and we never saw any of them. To make matters worse, it was easy to confuse his name with that other Irish scholar, his cousin, Standish Hayes O'Grady. Moreover, the latter had also something of the bardic impulse, and, in *Silva Gadelica*, fashioned for himself an exuberant and strange prose which has suffered from equal neglect.

My own acquaintance with the work of O'Grady was sudden and completely unexpected. One Sunday evening when all the guests were gone, I happened to linger on in A.E.'s " little painted room." As if glad to be rid of politics and the Ulster question, A.E. began to talk to me about the work of O'Grady, rapidly, excitedly, until the very room seemed legendary. He moved up and down through a haze of tobacco smoke, quoting long passages from memory, and, as I smoked my pipe furiously, I could catch glimpses over his shoulder of his own mythological pictures on the walls. Snatching the volumes of the *Bardic History* from his shelves, he read for me passages from them and, after a wild search, found that later romance, *The Flight of the Eagle*. This story of Elizabethan Ireland culminates in a wonderful scene. Red Hugh O'Donnell, on his escape to the North, climbs to the tarn on Slieve Gullion and sees, as in a vision, all the heroic and mythological past. As I heard for the first time that Homeric roll-call of names, so long forgotten and lost in total obscurity, I was aware for the first time of an older religion than the one I had known from childhood.

Long after midnight I hurried down Clanbrassil Street and across a Liffey bridge past the Four Courts with a thousand years under my arm, for A.E. had lent me those rare and precious

volumes of the *Bardic History*. Truth to tell, I was vaguely disappointed by those prose elaborations of the ancient epics. In their rhetorical style they belonged to an older generation than mine and I had found them too late. It was O'Grady's power to stimulate the imagination in his descriptions of the annals and sagas rather than his own imaginative versions that I found most exciting. So I liked best that strange eccentric work of imaginative scholarship, *The History of Ireland: Critical and Historical*, with its sudden evocations.

"But all around, in surging, tumultuous motion, come and go the gorgeous, unearthly beings that long ago emanated from bardic minds, a most weird and mocking world. Faces rush out of the darkness, and as swiftly retreat again. Heroes expand into giants and dwindle into goblins or fling aside the heroic form and gambol as buffons; gorgeous palaces are blown asunder like smoke wreaths; kings with wands of silver and ard-roth of gold, move with all their state from century to century puissant heroes, whose fame reverberates through battles, are shifted from place to place . . . buried monarchs reappear. The explorer visits an enchanted land where he is mocked and deluded. Everything is blown loose from its fastenings. All that should be most stable is whirled round and borne away like foam or dead leaves in a storm."

This may be wilful obscurantism, but to a young mind it was exciting perhaps because of its literary dangers. O'Grady has been praised for the grand simplicity and heroic spirit of his work. But this breadth is attained, I think, at the cost of over-simplification and is due to the influence of Victorianism. The ancient texts set down in the ninth and tenth centuries are themselves much more complex, and O'Grady himself was quite aware of that fact. In one of his gigantesque footnotes he wrote of the saga, *The Destruction of the Hostel of Da-derga* :—

This great tale starts, in its native weirdness and horror, straight from the heart of the barbaric ages. On every side it opens chasms and weird vistas into phases of thought and feeling, which we cannot now realise or understand.

Rhetorical prose can only suggest; poetry, with its more complicated forms and imagery, can define.



When O'Grady edited the *Pacata Hibernia* he made some discoveries for himself concerning the appalling political corruption of that age. But it is significant that when he wrote his stories of Elizabethan Ireland he chose the few heroic figures who were without fear or reproach. In this age of the realistic novel it is a little difficult to appreciate that Victorian restraint. His later romances are stirring adventure tales written for the young and in some ways he never passed from the mood of adolescence. *The Bog of Stars* and other stories of Elizabethan times are rich and accurate in their descriptions, and it has always seemed to me that O'Grady was influenced in them by the prose of Samuel Ferguson. *The Hibernian Nights' Entertainment*, which Ferguson wrote as a young man, has never been reprinted. The stories in that collection are vigorous and show that Ferguson might have become a powerful historical novelist. Unfortunately, he mingled vivid idiomatic speech with a curiously stilted Victorian dialogue, but his descriptions are always accurate and picturesque in their detail. The stories are supposed to be told to Red Hugh O'Donnell and his fellow captives in Dublin Castle, and it is significant that O'Grady's first romance was *Red Hugh's Captivity*, afterwards rewritten and published as *The Flight of the Eagle*.

In the early days of the Irish Free State, Ernest Boyd edited *The Coming of Cuculain* and other books by Standish O'Grady for the Talbot Press, but the only account of his career is to be found in a very brief memoir by his son published seventeen years ago. For a number of years Standish O'Grady edited the *Dublin Daily Express*, but in 1898 he left the capital in order to become editor of *The Kilkenny Moderator*. His attempt to make a forgotten midland town into a cultural centre must have surprised the pious publicans and grocers of the locality. The Christmas number of *The Kilkenny Moderator* in that same year contained contributions from W. B. Yeats, A.E., Fiona Macleod, Yorke Powell, Stopford Brooke, Lady Gregory, T. W. Rolleston, Arthur Perceval Graves, Douglas Hyde, John Eglinton, Nora Hopper, Eva Gore-Booth, George Coffey, H. S. Doig, John Todhunter. The editorial article by O'Grady himself was an exposition of the pagan origins of the great Christmas festival. For six years O'Grady edited the *All Ireland Review* and its files still await research. He was attracted by lost causes and his attempts to rally the Anglo-Irish landlords to his own aristocratic ideal resulted in failure and a Phillipic written in noble prose. Had O'Grady

taken the last political step of nationalism, he might have had more influence, but he combined his passionate devotion to Irish culture with what might be described as sentimental Unionism. Unlike Yeats in his later years, he abandoned his ideas of aristocracy and, regarding our civilisation as the "Exploitation of Man by Man," he evolved a communistic ideal of his own. O'Grady was one of the first writers to recognise the genius of Walt Whitman, and it would be interesting to trace the influence of the American poet on his mind. In a late essay dealing with the death of King Laery who was slain by the Sun and the Wind, O'Grady elaborated his own simple pagan creed. Ferguson checked his own imagination and added an unconvincing Victorian moral to each of his poems, but O'Grady yielded himself with all his imagination to the pieties of our forgotten Celtic religion. Our Universities slumber contentedly, but it is possible that research students from other countries will explore for us the pioneer work of Standish James O'Grady.

## DRAMATIC COMMENTARY

*By A. J. Leventhal*

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|---|--------------------------|
| THE SHOW BOOTH. By Alexander Blok. Translated by Padraic Colum and V. Uranoff.                                      | } Lyric Theatre Company. |
| BRIEF CANDLES. By Laurence Binyon.  |                          |
| THE FLAME. By Austin Clarke.  |                          |
| TWELFTH NIGHT. By William Shakespeare. Dublin Gate Theatre.   |                          |
| THE MERCHANT OF VENICE. By William Shakespeare. Translated into Yiddish by A. Meisels. New Yiddish Theatre, London. |                          |

I do not know what the reaction of a modern Russian audience would be to what the programme called Alexander Blok's satire on the notions and high-flown language of romance, certainly that of the Abbey Theatre audience was one of bewilderment. When the play first appeared in Russia Blok's friends took it as a sign that he had parted company with them in their common pursuit of the ideal life, and they were hurt that he should have abandoned an idealism upon which he and his school based their literary and political hope. It is a far cry now from the Maeterlinck stage, and Blok's denial of it, as well as of his own earlier work, is a sign of his modernity. His notion, however, of using an excess of symbolism as a homeopathic remedy defeated its satiric object. Confusion became worse confounded without a comprehensible comic commentary. There was neither the nihilism of the dadaists, who could be riotously funny in their unreason, nor the seriousness of the surrealists, who are only funny by accident. Pirandello has exploited far more thoroughly than Blok

the idea of the author being swamped by his own characters, though it must be granted that the role of author (admirably interpreted by Edgar Keating) was the only comprehensible comic character in the play.

It is curious that Blok should have used *The Show Booth* as a means of expressing his renunciation of his own earlier belief in the ideal; it is his unconventional way of destroying the dream by the imposition of the real. The Occultists, in comic sentences, foretell the arrival of a maiden from a distant land, her features are like marble, she is like the snow on the frozen lake; but when she does arrive it is as Death. The author's intention is obvious, but it fails because he crowds his stage with too many lovers when he could easily have pointed his burlesque with Pierrot, Columbine and Harlequin alone. The dancing broke the monotony of many dreary passages; the choreography, however, was too stereotyped, whilst the dancers, with the notable exception of Maurice Selwyn, were too amateurish and altogether too plump. It must, nevertheless, be said that Mr. Selwyn's genius lies more in his feet than in his speech. As Pierrot, he pirouetted as though to the pantaloons born, but his voice was thin and timbreless. The translation of this fantasy by Padraic Colum and his collaborator, it is worth mentioning, appeared for the first time in this magazine in 1924.

*Brief Candles*, Laurence Binyon's poetic drama on the fate of the young Princes in the Tower, just managed to hold our attention during the one act of its duration. Its Shakespearean manner appeared quite simple after the intricacies of Blok. Its simplicity, in fact, was its greatest failing. There were too many lines sententiously stuffed with commonplaces of sentiment to make the play really arresting. Rita O'Dea, as the Duchess of York, made the most of her dramatic part, and George Green limped in the best Richard the Third manner as the winter of his discontent moved into a blood-drenched spring.

There was, in this varied Lyric Theatre programme, a revival of Austin Clarke's *The Flame*. Here the players were more at home, nursing their lines lovingly and with the same assiduity as the nuns in the play tended the flame of St. Brigid. Florence Lynch excelled herself as the Old Nun, and Marjorie Williams played the Abbess with terrifying sternness, which brought out all the more effectively the beautiful Novice of Ronnie Masterson, who shook out her golden locks from the prison of her veil with an unforgettable gesture of purity and defiance.

There was another revival—*Tomaus O Cahan and the Ghost*—in the verse-speaking section of the programme. The corpse was altogether too grim—too dead, in fact—and one missed the great cry of Liam Redmond in the original presentation which relieved the tension and struck the right humorous note demanded by this folk poem.

Like Pepys, though unlike him I had not sworn never to go to a play without my wife, I could not forbear to go and see *Twelfth Night* when its production was announced. Unlike him, too, I took great pleasure in it. The diarist was not altogether indiscriminating when he described it after his second visit as "a silly play and not related at all to the name or the day." However, we

now accept without question all the fooling and all the improbabilities as we revel in the Illyrian lyricism of the serious characters, in the pranks of Sir Toby, the quips of Feste, even if we believe that Malvolio, like Shylock, was ill-used or, as Olivia puts it, "most notoriously abused."

Maurice O'Brien, as Malvolio, played the part with his usual polish, skilfully measuring his pauses, strutting and posturing before his lady with comic assurance. His pitiful dignity, even when clad in his cross-gartered yellow stockings, never left him. I have but one complaint. His final exit after he has discovered the heartless plot should have shown him just a little crestfallen at the very least; he strode from the stage like a conqueror, bearing himself as proudly as did the Yiddish Shylock in the London production to which I refer below. Eve Watkinson surprises more and more by her versatility. She seems to be able to interpret the most varied roles with equal ease. As a character in a Greek play, a drawingroom drama or an Austin Clarke medieval poetic drama, we find her adequately equipped for an individual performance. And now, as Viola, she shows that Shakespeare has no lines that she cannot render with a music and an understanding that clarifies the meaning and pleases the ear.

John Welsh, as Sir Toby, sported the traditional *embonpoint*, but it was rather overstated, suggesting that he must have nourished himself on synthetic cakes and ale to provide this all too artificial rotundity. This may be a pardonable concession to stage convention but not so his speech which, though loud, was lost. It seemed that this time it was genuine ginger that was hot i' the mouth. Charles Mitchell's Sir Andrew had just the right mixture of timidity and comedy; he gave a delightful performance, which was only exceeded among the conspirators against Malvolio by the sprightly acting of Iris Lawler as Maria. Christopher Casson, as Feste, sang and spoke, bounded and capered in the fool tradition; we did not miss a word, though we might have dispensed with an occasional invisible hurdle. Aiden Grennell's Orsino and Doreen Keogh's Olivia were played with quiet confidence. The production was a complete success, played against a charming setting by Kay Casson. Her drop-curtain had precisely the right gay note.

It is just seventy years since the Yiddish theatre was founded by Goldfaden, and as a proof of its persistent vitality the New Yiddish Theatre was opened this year in London in association with the Arts Council of Great Britain. With the memory of Hilton Edwards' Shylock still fresh in my mind, I visited this new theatre in the East End of London to see *The Merchant of Venice* in a Yiddish translation. Hilton Edwards' interpretation of the Jew, like Edmund Keane's and Henry Irving's, was a sympathetic one, weighing the scales on the injustice done him rather than on the diabolically planned revenge. But judged beside Meier Zelniker's reading of the part the Shylock of the Dublin actor seemed a monster. Never could there have been such an underplaying of villiany, such an overplaying of passionate rectitude as in this translation into, as it were, the living language of the protagonist. There may have been a knife somewhere in the background in the trial scene, but it certainly was not produced for sharpening, and as a result there was no punning on 'sole' and 'soul', the line being calmly omitted in translation since it might suggest a blood-thirstiness out of keeping with the nobility of the character as here conceived. Shylock had evolved from the comic creature of the Elizabethan scene through the inter-



mediate humanising stages into a symbol of persecuted Israel. Such was the mood in which the part was played, reaching to a climax of triumph not for Antonio and his friends but for the outwitted lonely figure on the Rialto. Portia has successfully pleaded her cause. Shylock is bent low in abject humiliation; he moves slowly towards the wings, when Bassanio jeeringly tugs his gabardine. Suddenly he straightens himself, walks deliberately across the stage, fixing the occupants in turn with a contemptuous look, and then with uplifted head and beard pointing upwards he strides, in awe-inspiring silence, across the whole length of the proscenium, arrogantly proud, the Eternal Jew triumphant in what can only be temporal defeat. It was magnificent but it was not Shakespeare.

## Art Notes

By Edward Sheehy.

# IRISH PAINTING IN LONDON

I was curious to know how the English critics would react to the exhibition of Living Irish Art, held during October at the Leicester Galleries. As far as I can gather, the general feeling seemed to be one of surprise that anything so good could come out of this neutral backwater. Several critics were amazed that Irish painting was not more obviously provincial. No one, however, attributed our success to the diaspora of the war years and the influence of our temporary guests. Louis le Brocquy was almost unanimously acclaimed the most important painter among those shown; an opinion which, after I had seen the exhibition, I thought well founded. Evie Hone's stained glass was highly praised, and for the right reasons. One critic at least was enthusiastic about the work of Father Jack Hanlon almost to the exclusion of anything else. Two painters for whom I have considerable admiration were, in my opinion, poorly represented. Cecil French Salkeld's show in Dublin in September contained much better work than either of his pictures here; and Daniel O'Neill is a much better painter than his London exhibits would lead the unfamiliar critic to expect. Louis le Brocquy, on the other hand, showed the best work of his I have yet seen. His development has been astonishingly consistent. He is a sophisticated painter and a very careful architect of form. His palette is restrained, though rich in subtle nuances which he uses to accentuate the balanced interplay of line and plane of which his pictures are built up. Two pictures here, *Sick Tinker Child* and *Tinker Man*, show him very near the climax of his present development, wherein an esoteric aestheticism predominates. It is difficult to see what more he can say in the precise and studied idiom he has perfected. Incidentally, I enjoy the pictures none the less for seeing scant relation between them and the titles.

More than one English critic appeared puzzled at what must have seemed an amazing catholicity in the taste of those who organised the exhibition; and indeed I sympathised with them. From the title one might legitimately expect the work of painters who had, in one sense or another, broken away from the traditional. As it was, the mixture was disconcerting. It seems to me unfair to the orthodox or academic painter to show his work in an exhibition where the chief bias is towards the experimental. No matter how good the academic

work, its excellences will inevitably be obscured by the less inhibited idiom of the modern painter. The spectator is also at a disadvantage, being unable to receive the different types of impression within, as it were, the one context. It is difficult to appreciate a fine wine after whiskey, Mozart after Moussorgsky. In fact, the spectator tends to be very much less catholic in taste than the organizers of exhibitions generally realise. He is either an out and out rebel, or else is infuriated with anything which is not visually and emotionally familiar. For this reason Maurice McGonigal's *The Harbour, Clogher*, fresh and lovely in colour, beautifully balanced in its composition and displaying the most finished craftsmanship, lost by being out of context. Needless to say, the sugary impasto of Letitia Hamilton was also out of place, as was the delicate whimsy of Lady Glenavy. On the other hand, Harry Kernoff, Colin Middleton and Patrick Hennessy are three painters whose inclusion would have helped to justify the title.

Apart from these few strictures, the exhibition served its purpose, and will, I hope, become an annual event. In fact, some kind of reciprocal arrangement which would give Dubliners the opportunity of seeing annually an exhibition of modern English painting would be all to the good.

Unfortunately I missed Daniel O'Neill's very successful show in Dublin. From recent pictures of his, including those in London, I have the feeling that this very fine painter is in danger of devoting his talents to the production of the slickly fashionable, superficially modern type of picture which the publishers of *Vogue* occasionally choose for their covers. At the moment (though admittedly I speak out of limited knowledge) he seems to be pursuing a kind of shallow beauty which he achieves through his innate lyricism and his undoubted quality as a painter. But the result, though it may give momentary pleasure, has neither depth nor permanence. Beauty is a quality inherent in something well done, and not a thing to be pursued for its own sake.

Cecil French Salkeld, at Victor Waddington's, defies any facile analysis as a painter. The precision of his images, a palette which is individual and exotically sombre, added to a subtly formalised distortion in his drawing, enable him to give reality to what is frequently a purely imaginary world. His mastery of colour is seen in his *Gauguin on Tahiti*, where a blaze of vermilion from beneath a curtain glows through a half-lit interior. Here is an over-dramatic, too literary subject which one accepts because of its sheer virtuosity as a painting. *The Birthday Present* is, to my mind, his finest picture here; though, with a few emphatic exceptions, I enjoyed the greater part of the exhibition.

Jack B. Yeats continues to astonish. He succeeds in painting pictures which appear to illustrate the triumph of the accidental, but which, on analysis, are seen to depend on an absolutely sure eye for colour as a vehicle for the expression of mood. Accident could not produce effects at once so certain and so varied. *A Jar of Scents*, a violent picture in massed reds, blues and yellows, is like a blare of trumpets, shocking the senses into violent awareness. *Moore's Melodies*, built up of tiny flecks of colour, frequently dabbed on straight from the tube, has the soothing quiet of a harpsichord. *Held Up by Shower* combines dazzling, multicoloured light with a precision of form unusual in Yeats' more recent work, making a lovely picture. *The Donkey Show* is more like his painting of some twenty years ago when his drawing was rigidly formal and he avoided direct light in his pictures. *The Horse Lover* harks back to still another phase in which he uses his modern technique in his original role of interpreter of wild life in the

west. Occasionally, as in *The Dark Bathe*, he can come surprisingly near his notoriously unsuccessful imitators.

A great number of Rolli Roland's pictures, also at Victor Waddington's, are too deliberately modern, too consciously of the school of Picasso. One may admire or abominate Picasso; but even his detractors will at least admit the violence of their reaction. The imitation, like the stage anarchist, has no terrors, and therefore no meaning. Nevertheless Rolli Roland shows that he has definite qualities as a painter in a less spectacular field. The unstudied brush-drawings *Street Scene I* and *Main Street* have a pleasant freedom and a lyrical freshness; while among the pictures in gouache, *Donegal Vista* shows a good sense of colour.

Patrick Hennessy, at the Dublin Painters' Gallery, is probably the most consistent and finished in quality of Ireland's younger painters. He has a sensuous feeling for texture whether of porcelain, old, weathered timber, fruit, flowers or fabric. One of his best pictures here, *The Scarlet Robe* has, for him, a curious innovation. The whole picture is warmed by a few square inches of the subdued scarlet of the label on a wine bottle, which transmutes his otherwise morbidly austere palette into something much more living. Throughout the show as a whole there is evidence of a welcome addition of warmth to his palette. While I admire the technical virtuosity of a picture such as *Midsummer, Crosshaven*, I can neither like nor escape from the feeling of death and decay with which he infuses his landscapes.

## BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

By M. J. MacManus

### Exhibition of Swift Rarities at Texas University.

The Bi-Centenary of the death of Jonathan Swift was not permitted to pass unnoticed by librarians. There were book exhibitions to mark the occasion in places as far apart as Cambridge, Dublin, New York, California and Texas. In Swift's own city both Trinity College and the National Library had rare editions and relics of the great Dean of St. Patrick's on view.

One of the most notable exhibitions was that organised by the University of Texas, of which a Catalogue, compiled by Mr. Autrey Nell Wiley, lies before me as I write. Texas, thanks to the munificence of donors like John Henry Wrenn, George A. Aitken and Miriam Lutchter Stark, is surprisingly rich in Swiftian treasures and has had, besides, the invaluable guiding hand of Professor R. H. Griffith—bibliographer of Pope—in directing the fortunes of its collection.

The bibliographical value of Mr. Wiley's list lies in the fact that it provides collations of Swift rarities which have hitherto been unrecorded, having escaped the notice of even such tireless research workers as Dr. H. Teerink and Mr. Harold Williams. Texas has, for instance, unique copies of an Edinburgh edition of *A Project for the Advancement of Religion*, printed in the same year—1709—as the first London edition; of *The Virtues of Sid Hamet the Magician's Rod*, a single folio sheet printed in Dublin in 1710; and of *A Proposal for an Act of Parliament to Pay off the Debt of the Nation without Taxing the Subject* [Dublin, 1732].

Apart from unique copies, all the great masterpieces are on the shelves in Texas: the excessively rare first issue of the first editions of *Gulliver*, with the portrait in the first state; two copies of the first edition of *The Tale of a Tub*; and first editions of the five *Drapier's Letters* published in Dublin in 1724. Amongst the other rarities in the Exhibition may be mentioned a complete file of the *Athenian Gazette*, in which Swift's first printed poem appeared: the *Proposal for the Universal Use of Irish Manufacture* [Dublin, 1720]; and the rare *Drapier's Miscellany* [Dublin, 1733].

This is a Catalogue of considerable bibliographical importance.

### Sale of an Irish Collector's Library.

The library of Mr. J. Barry Brown, of Naas, which was disposed of in a two-days' sale at Messrs. Totheby in London in October had many points of interest. It differed from most other Irish libraries sold in the same rooms in that it was not an ancient baronial collection brought together by successive generations of the same family over a long period, but a collector's library assembled by a single hand in a matter of twenty years. Furthermore, it would not be classed as an Irish library save in the sense that it was located in Ireland; the purely Irish books which it contained were less than two per cent. of the whole.

It was, however, the library of a man of taste, whose interests were wide and whose knowledge was exact. Fine bindings, French illustrated books of the eighteenth century, books with coloured plates, fore-edge paintings, books from famous presses—all these were strongly represented. The top price of the sale was fetched by a copy in contemporary French morocco of that lovely book in four volumes, La Borde's *Choix de Chansons*, with engravings by Moreau and others. This brought £330 and the price would have been considerably higher had the binding not been somewhat heavily repaired. A magnificent copy of Ariosto's *Roland Furieux* [2 vols. in four, Paris 1775-83] with 48 plates after Cochin and sumptuously bound, made £220. An *Anacreon Sapho, Bion et Moschus*, large paper [Paris, 1773] with plates by Morrarty after Eiren, and in a binding by Dérome went for £160. A book that does not depend on the binding for its value is Moreau Le Jeune's *Monument de Costume* [Paris, 1789]; Mr. Brown's copy, plainly bound, realised £160.

These, of course, were the high spots. The modern first editions, with a few exceptions, showed a decline in value. George Moore's *Literature at Nurse*—one of the rarest of all Moore items—fetched no more than £10 even in a presentation copy inscribed by the author to Lady Gregory. Four other George Moore firsts, lumped together, attracted no higher bid than thirty-five shillings. £5 secured first editions of the two Kipling *Jungle Books*, which used to sell for more than ten times that amount. On the other hand, a figure of £8 10s. for an autographed copy of Yeats's *Wanderings of Usheen*, and £5 for Joyce's *Exile's* and *Pomes Penyeach*—sold together—was not unsatisfactory. A copy of the first edition of Boswell's *Johnson*, with the rare *Principal Additions and Corrections* bound in, could not be called expensive, even though it was rebacked, at £34. It is a matter for regret that some fine examples of fore-edge paintings—the volume of the *Citizen and Gentleman's Almanack* for 1803-06, bearing charming water-colours of the Dublin Custom House, Trinity College and the



Bank of Ireland, old Carlisle Bridge and Sackville Street—did not remain at home. Fore-edge paintings of Irish interest are extremely rare and there is none, so far as I know, in any public collection in this country.

The cataloguing left something to be desired. There did not seem to be much point in listing a soiled copy of the first edition of E. C. Bentley's *Trent's Last Case* by itself, whilst an unusually fine copy of the first edition of James Stephen's *Crock of Gold*—complete with the original dust-wrapper—was not even mentioned.

The total for the two days' sale amounted to £5,640.

## BOOK REVIEWS

CURLEWS. By Temple Lane. Talbot Press. 2s. 6d.

THE DEVIL'S WALTZ. By Sydney Goodsir Smith. MacLellan. 6s.

THE ENEMIES OF LOVE. By Maurice Lindsay. MacLellan. 6s.

WITH NO CHANGED VOICE. By John Irvine. Wm. Mullen, Belfast; Talbot Press, Dublin.

Temple Lane is, of course, better known as a novelist than as a poet, but that she is a poet "when the right mood is on her" there can be no doubt. I don't think this book is as good as "*Fisherman's Wake*" but it contains some poems equal to any in the earlier book. "*Curlews*" might have been written by two people. Many of the pieces in it aim at being no more than verse. These are always tuneful, sometimes, whimsically sentimental, sometimes amusing with some hint of "Stage Irishism" in them:

I met another fellow, old, with eyes I can't forget,  
 " 'Twas what I longed to do," he sighed, " but never would be let."  
 " You make a big mistake," I said, " I'd buy if I were you,  
 Then go down there and settle and the wife will follow, too!"

There is no harm in such verses but they leave a kind of shamed displeasure in the mind when one remembers that from the same hand came that lovely and moving poem, "*The Last Fishing*" which readers of this magazine will not easily have forgotten, or when one turns the pages of this book to come on such poems as "*The Suburb in Frost*," "*Beata Beatrix*, or "*Was It Another or I?*" of which this is a fragment:

This I, who grow neuter and tame  
 Till I scarcely seem linked to a name,  
 I am thinking of one with a will like a flame  
     to compel the way back  
 By the river-bound, tree-caressed track,  
 To the mountains, the torrents, the boulders, the  
     mosses, the otters, the thatchment of bloom  
 Roofing brightly the tomb of the years, being sown  
 By no hand but the gallant wind's own,  
 Or by finches and thrushes and larks between  
     mornings and darks . . . .

"*Curlews*" has been excellently produced by the Talbot Press at an amazingly low price.

Sidney Goodsir Smith's is one of the best, if not quite the best, of the "*Poetry Scotland*" series, and is a formidable addition to the force of the revival of Scottish national poetry which began with Hugh MacDiarmid twenty years ago. It opens with a group of love songs, tender, witty or rollicking, which invite a copious quotation that space will not allow. Here is just one verse from "*Falling off a Log*":

O green's the Spring, ma hinny,  
Alowe in ilka tree  
Green as the love that bursts between  
Ma hinny burd an me.

And here is one from another of the "*Five Blye Songs for Marion*" merely to give a hint of its flavour:

I loo ma luvie in a lamplit bar  
Braw on a wooden stool,  
Her knees cocked up and her neb down  
Slorpan a pint o yill.

The book's second section, entitled "*Prometheus*," is an expression of revolt against the subjection of the individual to social, economic or political interests and more particularly against the subjection of Scotland to England. There are some fine ranting ballads and a richly bitter irony. It is not "romantic Scotland dead and gone" that Mr. Smith sings but modern Scottish nationalism and modern Scottish Labour, not bonnie Prince Charlie but "John Maclean Martyr." He turns right away, like other of the younger Scottish poets, from the nostalgic cloak-and-sword tradition of Scott, and he turns from the comparative refinement of Burns to the broader actualities of an earlier tradition. Again his work demands quotation but the opening lines of "*Prometheus*":

Now freedom fails in field and wynd  
A certain pattren haunts ma mind—  
O' man's impassioned protest killt  
Bi the owreharlan pouer that Fate  
Gies gratis til the tyrants' haund  
Tae dumb truth's peril til his state . . . .

and this one stanza from "*To the Shade of Yeats*":

Yeats, if ye luik aye tae the past  
Biggan a warld on the map o a dream  
Whaur puirith is douce and reserved for the best  
An ignorance pairt o a seilfu scheme,  
Wi grand injustice the source o guid  
And tyrannie throned i the image o Gode,  
Why praise yir "Indomitable Irishrie"  
That wrassled wi thae throu the centuries?

will have to serve as indication of his quality.

The third and last section deals with the war, and sympathy with Poland (there are two translations from Stefan Borsukiewicz) and with the Russian resistance to Germany inspires some of the finest poems which are none the less true in themselves because the Russians have not always been satisfied with even an eye for an eye. But it is to Scotland that his thoughts, fears and hopes always return with realistic determination.

The foreign war tuims mony a bed  
But yet seems faur awa—  
Two hunner year o union's bled  
The veins mair white nor ony war.

and love of Scotland provokes this bitter comment on one of war's more intimate effects. It is called "Mars and Venus at Hogmany":

The nicht is deep,  
The snaw liggs crisp wi rime  
Black and cauld the leafless trees;  
Midnight, but nae bells chime.

Throu the tuim white sleepan street  
Mars and Venus shauckle past,  
A drucken jock a drucken hure  
Rairan "The Ball o Kirriemuir

Less obviously, but no less certainly, Mr. Maurice Lindsay's fire is blown upon by the same wind,—such a wind as was blowing in this country thirty years and more ago. Outwardly the poems in "*The Enemies of Love*" are such as an English poet of to-day might have written but again and again the force behind the writer is found to be his love for Scotland, his Scottish nationalism, his indignation at the subjection of her real interests to those of her neighbour. He, too, would have her turn from the past to the shaping of an independent, vigorous modern life of her own:

So it is with straining Scotland, jealous,  
exhausted, like a tired fretting mother  
she stares at her baby past and weeps for the lonely,  
unhappy years that are over;  
would she but change her thoughts, as the sky shifts  
clouds and seasons, a little further,  
she could be strong with the strength of all ages.  
and filled with zeal of a laughing lover.

He can recognise the value of the romantic appeal to patriotism while depreciating the futility in which it often ends:

And yet you're still a symbol that can turn  
the pulse more quickly, though the white cockade  
that once set faithful Gaelic hearts to burn  
is now an emblem of the whisky trade.

So I salute you, luckless Scottish prince,  
and do not care what were your personal ends:  
scotland has bred no reckless patriot since,  
and on receding memories depends.

Sometimes these poems carry typically English mannerisms and an apparently deliberate break-down of mood and music, but for the most part they are satisfying and moving in their determination to express accurately and honestly thoughts that are never shallow or ignoble.

Only a very brief mention can be made of John Irvine's new book, *With No Changed Voice*, which arrived too late for adequate notice. Those who know his earlier work will appreciate his choice of title, for here they will find the same formal grace of expression, the same wistful undertones, the same skilled employment of literary associations. Many of his earlier poems have been set to music by Roger Quilter, Armstrong Gibbs, and others, and there is hardly a poem in this book which is not an invitation to the composer. Here is just one verse from "Words For Music":

Who sings  
Down by the willows  
Love sings  
And the swallows pass  
On heedless wings,  
And there by the river  
Love sings.

W. P. M.

AFTERMATH. Poems by Stephen Gwynn. 1946. Dundalgan Press, Dundalk. 3s. 6d. Post free from Publishers, 3s. 8d.

It is more than twenty years since Dr. Stephen Gwynn gave us his *Collected Poems*, and now in *Aftermath* comes a welcome gathering of more recent verses. Among them he has wisely included *A Song of Defeat* and *A Song of Victory* from the unobtainable earlier volume, because, as he says, they "sum up what I felt about Ireland forty and twenty years ago—and still feel." One could wish when he was about it, that he had also reprinted

"Ireland, O Ireland! centre of my longings,  
Country of my fathers, home of my heart."

Written in the lilting measure of Darley and Meredith, which he has so often and so happily handled with a scholar's nice discrimination of longs and shorts, this poignant lyric has more in it to comfort the Irish exile than *The Lake Isle of Innisfree*. I write from experience. My earliest recollections of Dr. Gwynn's writings are linked with this poem, which appeared as a sort of introduction to *Highways and Byways in Antrim and Donegal* in 1899. The lines have been a strength and stay in distant places many a time since. Certainly, if he had never written anything else, his claim to a place of distinction among Anglo-Irish poets could rest on this poem alone.

Modestly Dr. Gwynn excuses the present volume on the grounds that he has found "so much pleasure in dabbling with verse." But he has the fortunate gift of sharing this pleasure with his readers, and his modesty is out of place. How is one to characterise these poems? They are, in the best sense of that



doubtful word, occasional. Patriot, statesman, soldier, traveller, sportsman, scholar—Dr. Gwynn has been all these, and all are represented. Every aspect of a richly varied life has overflowed into these verses. They take their colour from his experiences and his personality. The man of action is here as well as the man of letters. One notes with pleasure his enthusiasms, his ever-present sense of beauty, and above all, his unshaken loyalty to political ideals however unpopular, to old comrades however out of fashion, and to those gracious courtesies that belong to a way of life which may soon cease to be.

So we have his passionate love for Ireland reflected in *Davitt's Grave, Defeat, and Victory*; his affection for his native county in *Roads in Donegal*. *Meenaneary* celebrates a salmon stream in Mayo. Dr. Johnson's saying that "a man should keep his friendships in constant repair" is the theme of another poem. In lighter vein Dr. Gwynn sings of potato cakes, writes a humorous epitaph on an unfruitful pear tree, and execrates, in spite of Wordsworth, the lesser celandine.

"No! William might observe and moralise  
And praise the buds and seem to understand;  
But, when I read his 'Celandine', I ask,  
Did William ever take a spade in hand?"

There are several gracious poems to gracious ladies, full of fragrance, chivalry and charm. Perhaps the loveliest of these is the one which closes the volume, but it seems too personal to quote in a mere review. Some stanzas from another may give a sample of their delicate quality.

There was no challenge to the eye  
From face or form;  
Only a radiance, hovering by  
Gentle and warm:

Beauty of so indrawn a power  
As to express  
Utter absorption in its dower  
Of happiness.

In a rich ransom from long cares  
Her spirit lives,  
And through each breath intaken shares  
The peace she gives.

The volume is beautifully produced, a worthy product of the Dundalgan Press, where it may be obtained, post free, for 3s. 8d.

H. O. W.

PHILOSOPHICAL UNDERSTANDING AND RELIGIOUS TRUTH. By Erich Frank.  
Oxford University Press, New York. 2 dollars 50. pp. 209.

These Mary Flexner Lectures, delivered at Bryn Mawr College in 1943, are distinguished for their clarity of expression and fairness of argument. The author, Dr. Frank, was formerly Professor of Philosophy at the University of Marburg, and is now at Harvard. The width and depth of his reading can be

gauged by a study of the copious and learned notes which follow each lecture as appendices. The text of the lectures gives the author's conclusions succinctly and without obtrusion of learning. The translation from the German is to be specially commended for its felicitousness.

In six chapters the great themes of Man, God, Creation, Time and History are treated. Dr. Frank finds himself on more than one occasion summing up his own intellectual position in the words of St. Paul. He is at pains to point out the weakness and limitations of the Positivists when they write on these subjects, and on the whole his case is convincingly stated. Man has suffered a series of rude shocks when contemplating his own destiny with the findings of Copernicus, and later of Darwin, and later still of Freud, but still the view of death held by the theist makes the religious view of man's life intellectually satisfying. "Death is not merely the physical end of our life: it also has bearing on our moral existence." He admits the inability of arguments for the existence of God to convince those who are not prepared to make the leap of faith as a "leap into the light," and he contends, as many continental theologians writing out of great tribulation have been contending, that the real proof of God is "an agonized attempt to deny God." One criticism of his approach might be made here. Undoubtedly faith is gained by something more mysterious and more stirring than reason; but is not the paradox of faith supra-rational rather than irrational?

Dr. Frank is at his best in expounding his view of History in opposition to the theory that the story of man and his development is a natural, genetic process. He sees History as religious drama, and time, not just as sempiternity, but as opportunity. Wisdom, he points out, does not consist in recognising the situation, nor in remaining a factualist, collecting data, but wisdom is found through death, struggle, suffering, and history. He has the findings of Professor Toynbee to support him in this conclusion, and he attacks the Positivists with rapid fire from an existentialist battery with the contention that "the root of man's existence lies deeper than his thought can penetrate."

At the end, although he does not indicate that he holds any particular ecclesiastical allegiance, he finds the Christian interpretation of man and his world adequate in dealing with all the facts, although he deplores the emergence of a strict dogma, necessitated by opposition to Christianity. It is unfortunate, however, that he gives the impression that Christian dogma, which is really Christian data, is not necessary for Christian life.

G. S.

BERNARD SHAW: W. B. YEATS. *Letters to Florence Farr*. Edited by Clifford Bax. Home and Van Thal. 7s. 6d. net.

This slight—very slight—volume of letters, a reprint of the Cuala Press edition of 1942, brings together the lion and the lamb at the feet of the "starry"-eyed, "cantillating," lovely and wayward lady, Florence Farr. She was a "poetic" woman, Mr. Bax tells us, as indeed her melodious name suggests and the lion roared at her in his efforts to turn her into a hard-working professional actress—"There is nothing that drives me to such utter despair as when I make some blundering and unsuccessful attempt to make you see some technical point that my mother can teach to any idiot in a few lessons; and you shrink as if I were disparaging your artistic gifts," or more angrily—"As for the way you

tighten your upper lip, and bunch up your back, and stiffen your neck, and hold on to your elbow, that is, I admit, necessary to prevent you falling forward on your nose, and it is good for the calves and lumbar muscles, which are developed by the strain." But the lion also became a sucking dove on occasions, and wrote to the lady, when she failed him in appointments, in such ironically romantic terms as the following—"Years have passed over me—long solemn years: I have fallen in with my boyhood's mistress, Solitude, and wandered aimlessly with her, once more drifting like the unsatisfied moon."

Yeats's letters, compared with these, do indeed seem lamb-like. The tone is easier and there is less finished glitter. In one way they are less entertaining, since the punch and thrust of the others is lacking, but in their repetitive, go-as-you-please fashion they have another kind of attraction. The poet's spelling is erratic—Le Galleon, gypsey, antiants, but this on occasion results in the creation of a new fabulous animal, as in the anecdote about his father—"My father is still in America. He gave orders that no windows were ever to be opened. A window was opened by a house maid, and a Musketo got in. His letters are full of the Musketo. He makes after-dinner speeches and is evidently in great content." This has the kind of innocent charm that a gifted child might produce, gentle and mocking and at the same time startling the imagination, with that unexpected "Musketo." There are many such good stories, showing fantasy and arbitrariness: there are sudden raps at Florence—"as a correspondent you are prompt but meagre," and there are wild plunges into astrology. "In any case a man with Saturn entering his second house by transit has to look out for bad times."

After all this devotion on the part of the great, Florence Farr, we are a little astonished to learn, considered that only in Ceylon, in her Vedantist monastery, was she enjoying "a really interesting life at last . . . Fate has made all the important people here ill . . . it is exactly like being Queen Elizabeth." Apparently, when one is oneself a Queen Elizabeth, only the exercise of power can satisfy one: the devotion of the great is as nothing to that. Shaw and Yeats were both put aside by the lady, but their letters to her remain highly diverting, and together make a most entertaining book.

LORNA REYNOLDS.

OLIVER ELTON. 1891—1945. By L. C. MARTIN. From the Proceedings of the British Academy. Volume XXXI. Oxford University Press. 3s. 6d.

When John B. Yeats and his family went to live in Bedford Park, West London, in the late 'eighties, a small colony of writers and artists was there. The short verse plays of John Todhunter were acted in a local hall, and those productions suggested to the young poet, W. B. Yeats, the possibility of an Irish theatre. Oliver Elton was a neighbour of John Butler Yeats, and formed a close friendship with him. From those days he maintained an interest in the Irish literary revival, and in *Modern Studies*, 1907, he devoted an essay to "Living Irish Literature." Among his last publications was his biographical account of J. B. Yeats prefixed to the collection *Letters*, which appeared in 1944.

In 1890 Oliver Elton was appointed independent lecturer in English Literature in Owens College, Manchester, and held the post for ten years, until his election to the Chair at Liverpool. In his writings he combined scholarship with imaginative appreciation, and, as Mr. Martin points out, he had learned

much from Pater. He did not indulge in 'purple patches,' but his power of definition could be delicate and distinctive, as when, for example, he wrote of nature poetry in the Augustan Age.

The poetry of a tree, its service rendered of shelter and shadow, its honourable fate, when its stock is spent, of falling by the winds that prevent the woodman's axe—to hear of these things, amidst the full swing of the urban literature, is to sit refreshed, with a presentiment of change, outside the clamour and vapour and opulence of Rome.

Elton's great work, the three *Surveys of English Literature*, unlike many academic histories, is rich and imaginative in its interpretation. But Elton did not confine his interest entirely to English literature: he was a pioneer in the translation of Russian poetry. The Russian novelists and playwrights had received all the attention, but, as Elton declared, the soul and genius of the race are best seen in the poetry. Present-day interest in Pushkin, for instance, is mainly due to his labours. In 1938 he published *Eugeny Onegin* translated into English verse. When Pushkin wrote his masterpiece he was influenced by Byron's *Don Juan*, but he invented an intricate and flexible stanza of his own which consists of fourteen lines and many double rhymes. Elton used this stanza in his translation, and the fact that he was able to sustain it throughout so long a poem is a proof of his skill and perseverance.

But that is not our theme—I quit it;  
Better to hurry to the ball!  
Onegin thither now has flitted  
Full tilt, postillion, coach and all.  
And now, before the darkened houses  
And all along the street that drowns  
The pair of carriage lanterns throw  
Their rainbow patterns on the snow  
And shed a cheerful radiance yonder.  
That splendid house is spotted bright,  
All round, with little cups of light.  
Behind the spacious windows wander  
Shadows and glancing silhouettes  
Of freakish dandies, and coquettes.

During the years of his retirement, Professor Oliver Elton lived at Oxford, and when I was adjudicating there at the Poetry Festival, I had the good fortune of meeting him. Sitting in his sunny garden, he talked to me on several occasions of those early days when the Irish literary movement was beginning. He had been an old friend of Kuno Meyer, who was his colleague at Liverpool University, and was well acquainted with Gaelic lore and saga. For me it was a pleasant change; so few English poets and professors take any interest in Irish poetry.

AUSTIN CLARKE.

THE CYCLES OF THE KINGS. By Miles Dillon. Oxford University Press. 10s. 6d.

Hidden away in the *Revue Celtique* and other learned journals are the Royal Tales of Ireland. These tales have not been overlooked, however, by our poets and writers. The grim saga of Lowry Maen was used by Padraic Colum



as the theme of a long poem which he published some years ago, but it is possible that the poet found his details in the full paraphrase given in that splendid pioneer volume—O'Curry's *MS. Material for Irish History*. The episode of 'The King's Threshold' comes from the cycle of Guaire, but Yeats discovered it, I think, in Lady Wilde's collection of folk tales. James Stephens, in his delightful re-telling of fantastic Irish tales, has, however, kept close to the originals.

*Ancient Irish Tales*, edited by T. P. Cross and C. H. Slover, was published in America in 1935, and in the last section, "Tales of the Traditional Kings," a number of translations were collected from various journals. Dr. Myles Dillon has taken the hint and given us his own selection of these legends. It is rather a pity, however, that he did not follow the example of the American editors and print complete translations. He has chosen to paraphrase the stories in his own words with illustrative quotations. His book is not intended for scholars, but for the general reader. Some of the stories are quite short, and as Dr. Dillon points out, they are probably only notes for the bardic storyteller. He is of opinion that these small cycles will eventually help scholars in exploring our earlier history. Certainly they throw light on the mental habits of our race in the ninth and tenth centuries. While Europe was shrinking in horror from the gods and goddesses of Latin and Greek literature, and holy men were denouncing Apollo and Mercury as foul demons, Irish poets were telling cheerful stories of their own 'gods in exile.' In the story, *Combert Mongán agus Serc Duibe Lacha do Mongán*, we read of the adventures of Mongán, a son of Manánán Mac Lir, or, as some think, a re-incarnation of Fionn Mac Cumhail.

They travelled in this way, and as they came into Leinster they met the king on his way to the fair of Mag Life. Then they met Tíbraide and another monk, chanting the Office, book in hand. Mongán made a river through the plain in front of Tíbraide with a bridge across it. Tíbraide wondered at that, for no river had been seen there before, but he entered upon the bridge to cross over. The bridge fell upon the monks, and Mongán snatched the gospel book from Tíbraide's hand as he fell. He decided not to let them drown, but that they should be carried a mile down the stream. Mongán took the form of Tíbraide and gave Mac an Daimh the form of the other monk, and so they proceeded into the king's presence.

A highly diverting comedy of errors ensues. The little story is, to some extent, a satire on the excessive thaumaturgy to which our highly spiritual race was addicted. Recently our new suburban Gaels thronged the Abbey Theatre to witness the dangers and terrors of contemporary demoniacal possession. Their remote ancestors thronged around the winter fire to hear the parody which tells how MacConglinne exorcised the demon of gluttony. We may suspect that the gloom and devilry which we now encourage were really importations from other countries.

Some of these stories are records of violent events, but there are pleasant interludes. New to most readers will be the delightful story which dates from the tenth century, entitled *The Melodies of Buchet's House*. It tells how a hospitable man in Leinster named Buchet was reduced to poverty by the

exactions of his numerous guests. He lived in a forest hut with his aged wife and his foster daughter—Eithne. The girl was of royal birth, but she was faithful and affectionate as Cordelia. One day Cormac Mac Airt saw the girl milking the cows and he learned from her the misfortunes of her foster father, and so all ended happily.

The music of Buchet's house was his laughing cry to his guests: "Welcome. You will be happy, and I shall be happy along with you." Fifty warriors made music when the guests were drunk. Fifty maidens too played for the company. And then fifty harpers soothed the guests until morning.

And so men speak of "The Melodies of Buchet's House."

That is a delightful glimpse of a merrier Ireland than ours, but we hesitate to recommend this pleasant collection of royal tales to the 'unco guid.'

A. C.

POEMS FROM NEW WRITING, 1936—1946. Edited by John Lehmann. John Lehmann. 8s. 6d.

NEW WRITING AND DAYLIGHT. Edited by John Lehmann. John Lehmann. 10s. 6d.

WRITERS OF TO-DAY. Edited by Denys Val Baker. Sidgwick & Jackson. 8s. 6d.

There is an art of editing as there is of writing, an art in which Mr. Lehmann excels. Both, of course, are inseparable from conscience, from integrity, and one test of an editor is the degree to which in his selection of other men's work he has observed the requirements of his own personal vision. In spite of wide differences of theme and manner these poems selected from *New Writing* have a certain ultimate relationship, which can exist only because all had to be approved by one man's judgment, and they stand as a proof of the breadth as well as the individuality and tenaciousness of that judgment. Their relationship is as impalpable as it is certain, but it is most clearly betrayed by certain recurrent qualities—a frequent topicality of subject and an equally frequent effort to make the topical, the ephemeral, the personal, a vehicle of fluent, permanent, universal application. Music, too, is more simply present than in most modern collections; and clever, complicated, unemotional verse is unusually scarce. Mr. Lehmann's claim that the collection contains "... a high proportion of the outstanding poems that were written between the beginning of the Spanish Civil War and the end of the European War ..." is not unjustified. It is not possible to give any detailed account of the contents here. Auden is well represented by six poems, including the lovely "Lay Your Sleeping Head," and "The Leaves of Love"; there are translations from Louis Aragon, Demetrios Capetanakis, Pierre Jean Jouve, Lorca, George Seferis and other French, Polish, Greek and Czech poets. Day Lewis, Spender, David Gascoyne, Alan Lewis, Roy Fuller, Terence Tiller, John Lehmann, Louis MacNeice, Edith Sitwell (including "A Song of the Cold") are here, and that list is an inadequate indication of the contents. If one omits Day Lewis and Mac Neice, the only Irish Poets, I think, are Ewart Milne and Maurice James Craig, whose "Elegy" is one of the fine things of the book.

One expects a high standard now from "Daylight and New Writing," and the 1946 number is admirable. Again the Editor is John Lehmann, and he shows

the same discriminating individuality of taste in prose and verse. In the opening article he discusses the danger of State aids to culture: "Will it be said of our age," he asks, "that its fatality was to exploit more and more what was less and less," and he dwells with pessimistic justice on the comparative poverty of the work produced in France, England, Russia and other countries under State or semi-State encouragement. He ends more hopefully, however, with a declaration of faith in the power of the truly individual artists "who have hardened the shell of their creative personalities to withstand the vicious thrush-beaks of our times," and he proceeds thence to justify his faith by printing the imaginative and highly individual prose and verse of his 1946 selection. Again, only a mere suggestion of the contents can be given here—an exciting note on Valéry by Gide; a strange dream-like sketch, "Madame Parpillon's Inn," by Noel Devaulx (which owes something perhaps to Daudet's "Un Réveillant dans les Marais," at least in atmosphere); a short story by Gavin Lambert, which is memorable and moving in spite of a calculated naïveté which is occasionally irritating. Under the title, "The Future of Fiction," Rose Macaulay, V. S. Pritchett, Arthur Koestler, L. P. Hartley, Walter Allen and Osbert Sitwell discuss, mainly, the novel of to-day and find some need to apologise for it. Edith Sitwell writes on Iago, Michael Ayrton on Picasso and Laurie Lee contributes sharply realised and suggestive pictures in extracts from "A Cyprus Diary." The verse has quality and is exciting, but perhaps George Barker's "The Five Faces of Pity," John Heath-Stubbs's "Iphigenia in Tauris," and Laurence Durrell's translation of Angelos Sikelianos's "The Death Feast of the Greeks," are especially memorable. There can be no doubt of the value of the work which John Lehmann has undertaken in a world of international suspicions and warring ideologies.

*Writers of To-Day*, being a collection of short and succinct critical assessments of modern writers by modern writers, makes its chief appeal to writers, but some of the articles, and notably Derek Stanford's study of Arthur Koestler, as the novelist of the growing consciousness of the need for ethical judgment in the place of expediency in collective relationships, have a more general interest. Stuart Gilbert, author of "A Study of Ulysses," and co-translator of "Ulysses" into French, contributes a clear and subtle analysis of Joyce's permanent position in world-literature; Henry Reed on Edith Sitwell and Norman Nicholson on T. S. Eliot are both stimulating and coolly informative, and other articles in an excellent collection are Aldous Huxley, by J. B. Coates; Graham Greene, by Walter Allen; André Gide, by Wallace Fowlie; J. B. Priestley, by Jack Lindsay; F. G. Lorca, by Arturo Barea; Dorothy Sayers, by Paul Foster; John Steinbeck, by Bernard Raymund, and E. M. Forster, by D. S. Savage. W. P. M.

ST. MALACHY'S COURT. By Olivia Robertson. Peter Davies. 8s. 6d.

Here is a documentary of Dublin children, refugees from the tenements living in a block of "model" flats, with a playground. Olivia Robertson was in charge and it is revealing to watch her curiosity grow to interest, then to affection for many of the children.

She sees the sand-pit as a microcosm of Big Business, party politics and international relations.

"When infants under four arrive on the playground they are dumped in the sand to play. To the infant, however, the pit is not a small, concrete enclosure filled with sand in which to 'play.' It is a dangerous place of tribulation: a world of struggle and cunning.

"Imagine yourself to be a small child. Your business in the sand-pit is to work. You labour at making a home secure from invasion; you create works of art with sand and shells; you build towers and palaces. But to achieve this means a wrestle with your fellows. When you first arrive, a gigantic and powerful being known as LADY to her face, and THE WUMMAN behind her back, provides you with a bucket and spade; the instant she goes away, somebody steals them. The Enemy has two methods of doing this: male and female ways. Little boys seize your bucket and spade by force which makes you howl. This sound always brings the wumman who restores your implements, which means that you can keep them for about five minutes before they are stolen again. But little girls come smiling to you:

"Will yuh lend us your bucket and spade for a minute for to make a grand pie for yuh?"

Unsuspectingly you lend your implements. The little girls make a pie and then another and another. You sit doubtfully and don't like to howl as the pies are made for you. The wumman doesn't help you as you don't yell; you just sit and snivel quietly. However, there is a remedy. Hit a baby smaller than yourself and take *its* bucket and spade."

There is tragedy in the story of Carmel, whose portrait in the glory of First Communion white dress and lace veil, was drawn by Olivia Robertson, and deeper tragedy in the short life of Peter Keegan, who chalked pictures on the pavement until his uncle in England sent him a paint-box. At fourteen Peter was too old for free dinners, and was shut out from the playground. He became a messenger boy, lost his job because he fell ill with T.B., and vanished into hospital leaving only a book of drawings.

Fun, nonsense, ambition, jealousy, love of beauty are in the Court as in the world outside. This book has the same appeal as Dr. Robert Collis's *Marrowbone Lane*, but here the characters are children. Parents and authorities remain in the background.

Olivia Robertson's real triumph is of communicating deep feeling and sympathy without a trace of sentimentality. She can create character and whether dealing with ghosts, tinkers-come-to-town, hunchbacks, or ordinary delightful children is always interesting, often entertaining. The book is finely written, and the many drawings by the author are equally good.

PATRICIA LYNCH.

MR. PETUNIA. By Oliver St. John Gogarty. Constable. 8s. 6d.

In his new novel Dr. Gogarty brings us back to Virginia at the close of the eighteenth century. The story begins with a pleasant surprise, for who should we meet, bold as life, but the Toucher Plant riding cheerfully along a country road in the bright morning air of the New World! Toucher Plant, confident of Tiger Roche and other Anglo-Irish 'bucks,' has escaped from the pages of Dr. Gogarty's last book, *Mad Grandeur*, but those who expect rollicking adventures will be disappointed. The Toucher Plant is merely the choragus, allowing Dr.



Gogarty to comment in good-humoured and somewhat exaggerated brogue on the staid land-owners and householders of Virginia.

Mr. Petunia was a maker of clocks, small and dapper, with light yellowish eyes that gave a bright bird-like expression to the upper part of his face. He was an artist of European tradition and somewhat misunderstood in the Old Dominion. "Precision was poetry to Mr. Petunia, as it was in another craft to Alexander Pope. But let us describe his work in Dr. Gogarty's own delightful words:—

He was not the first to make visible the strides of Time, that unseen and soundless Lord of Life, the Master who shrivels the blossom and brings all things to maturity, save that which he cuts off before its prime. But he was pre-eminent amongst those who made the little engines whereby Time is measured and contracted from its limitless range in space to the narrow round of a dial.

From some guarded hints in the book we gather that Mr. Petunia was really a paranoiac. A bachelor, with slightly perverted instincts, he assumed the rôle of a timid Tarquin with consequences that were merely ridiculous. He brooded over his discomfiture and determined to revenge himself on Ann, the dashing young woman who had been forced to flee from her importunate host. In her anxiety to present her elderly husband with an heir, Ann had secretly visited an inn of no good repute, and Mr. Petunia proceeded to collect evidence against her.

The characterisation is dim and vague. The plot itself is strong, and when an ingenious incendiary clock leads the unfortunate Mr. Petunia to the gallows, the demarcation between paranoia and melodrama is extremely thin. There is little in this book to incite the rude passions of Irish readers, for Dr. Gogarty writes with a clinical exactness that is not without its own humour. One feels that the story itself is merely an excuse for a running commentary that can be enjoyed for its own sake by all who are willing to read between the lines. A nod is as good as a wink, and the moral of this curiously unsatisfactory story may be summed up in the words of one of its characters: "There's some sort of a joke going on behind the scene of life. And the old doctors knew it, and we jokers, too.

M. D.

**THE MAN IN BROWN.** By Maurice Walsh. Chambers. 9s. 6d.

This story of the solving of a capital crime is written admirably in the Central style, which, before the coming of the modern 'thriller,' was the medium used almost invariably by the writers of good fiction. The *motif* is not a usual one for Maurice Walsh to have worked upon, and in his Dedication to David Sears he attributes the origin of the plot to the teeming imagination of that admirer of the works of the late John Buchan. From a false accusation, and the freeing of a man accused, a sequence of startling happenings is related smoothly and evenly until we come to the solution of the mystery—Who killed Marcus Aitken? It is a well-spun yarn, in which Con Madden—a natural detective among nine suspects—and the author succeeded in everything that they set themselves to accomplish. Strongly contrasting characters, their prejudices and emotions, are revealed through action with a laudable minimum of physical

detail ; and in the alternating changes of interest between character and plot, as well as in the development of the minor crises leading up to the climax, there are the elements of surprise and suspense that go into the making of the best of action stories. The countryside scenes around Eglintoun and Danesford are pictured with the artistic purpose that is recognisable in this author's work.

THE CHANGELING OF MONTE LUCIO. By Violet Needham. Illustrated by Joyce Bruce. Collins. 8s. 6d.

Violet Needham has written a series of children's novels whose periods range from medieval days to our own times. Each is a well-written satisfying story with real characters and I am almost sure that "The Changeling of Monte Lucio" is her best, so far.

Here is the romance of twin brothers. Philip, the elder, proud, ambitious, thwarted by his own moodiness and delicacy—called in mockery The Changeling—is a tragic figure. Hugo, the younger, is the victim of intriguers, who attempt to use him against his brother. But The Changeling, hated by those who know him only in public, has won the loyalty and affection of both his brother and sister.

The theme is of a gypsy's prophecy that Philip, The Changeling, shall win the greater fame, yet Hugo shall rule even though Philip is the elder and therefore legally the ruler. Philip's chivalrous self-sacrifice makes the prophecy come true.

The dignity of walled cities and fortified castles, the clash of sword on armour, perilous rides through dark forests, the cloistered peace of Windri Abbey, make a rich though gloomy background for the thrilling adventures of the twins.

This is a story which will appeal to the romantic mind of a child and send torches flickering along the dim corridors of schools. In that magic hour before bedtime "The Changeling of Monte Lucio" will raise a drawbridge leading to a fabulous dreamland.

P. L.

ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS. DOCTOR OF DIVINE LOVE AND CONTEMPLATION. By Fr. Gabriel, O.D.C. Translated by a Benedictine of Starbrook Abbey. The Mercier Press, Cork. 10s. 6d.

These lectures on the teaching of St. John of the Cross were given in Rome to an audience of ecclesiastics, but the book with its numerous references and footnotes should be of great value to students.

For the ordinary reader I suggest that to read first the "Appendix," "To Think of Nothing," and "The Doctor of Active Contemplation," might make this difficult, but absorbing subject more easy of comprehension.

P. L.

A POSY OF WILDFLOWERS. By Victor Bonham-Carter and Hellmuth Weissenborn. Allan Wingate. 6s. 6d. net.

This little volume with its unpretentious title is a credit to all who have contributed to its production. The fifty odd wildflowers selected are daintily presented in plain or coloured woodcuts by Hellmuth Weissenborn, and each is accompanied by a note in which we get the English and Latin name or names of the plant, its use in medicine, its symbol, and in many cases the legends asso-

ciated with it, together with its habitat. In addition, we have, on the opposite page, well-selected quotations in verse and prose from writers ranging from Skelton and Chaucer to John Masefield. A recent writer has pointed that the number of wildflowers mentioned by our earlier poets is extremely limited, but the compiler of this little anthology has found at least fifty references to the fifty plants chosen, and each one of them well worth its place in such a book.

REDBRICK AND THESE VITAL DAYS. By Bruce Truscot. London: Faber and Faber. 216 pp. 10s. 6d. net.

Bruce Truscot's *Redbrick University*, published in 1944, has become already a standard educational work; indeed, it is hardly too much to say that informed discussion of the future of universities is impossible without having read it. In his latest book, the author returns to the charge, bolstering up part of the case put in *Redbrick University*, answering criticism, and covering a number of supplementary questions—the problem of the public schools, for instance. Mr. Truscot is particularly severe upon professors who ignore research, which he rightly believes to be an essential part of their work. "How many Arts professors of twenty years' standing," he asks, "would dare to print in *The Universities Review* a list of the contributions to knowledge which they have published during that time?" The scholar who fossilises, or degenerates into a mere lecturing machine, after he has reached the security of his Chair or Fellowship, is not unknown in Ireland. A good many faults in the university system can be advanced as excuses; but the fact remains that men who want to get research done seem to succeed in doing it. This is one of the university problems that cannot be solved by the key which, in this country, will solve very many—more money. It is a good illustration of the principle that reform must come, essentially, from within.

W. J. W.

MAJOR OPERATION. By James Barke. Glasgow, William Maclellan. Price 4s. 6d. net.

THE FUR COAT. By A. G. Macdonell. Macmillan & Co., Ltd. Price 5s. net.

*Major Operation* is a play which will appeal to those theatre groups which devote themselves to drama dealing with social revolution. It has the sincerity of a play by Odets and, like the latter's plays, demands concentration and ingenuity on the part of the producer. Basing this work on his novel of the same name, James Barke is inclined here and there to indulge in long speeches which, however, if delivered by enthusiastic actors, could reach a sympathetic audience. On the other hand there are moments of intense drama which made possible the endurance of occasional excessive verbiage.

*The Fur Coat* belongs to the entertainment of the tired business man rather than, as in the case of the previous play, to that of the man who is tired of business men. It was produced at the Comedy Theatre, London last year and must undoubtedly have been successful. Mr. Macdonell knows his craft and how to assuage the weariness of mind and flesh. When our local repertory theatres wish to make good a loss on a play for the few they will certainly recoup themselves with *The Fur Coat*.

A. J. L.



POETRY (LONDON) X. Edited by Tambimuttu. Nicholson and Watson. 15s. net.

The appearance of such a book as this is an occasion on which to pontificate, to adapt Dr. Johnson and say roundly : " Sir (or Madam), I should advise no one to print who is likely to perpetuate imbecility." Why the aspiring authors have been allowed to indulge their folly, to offer to others their worthless scribbles is not clear. The editor tells us that he has " collected together " the poems of writers who have never before appeared in print or have not yet appeared in PL. Never to have appeared in print or in PL is not necessarily meritorious. I suppose any collection is evidence of industry on the part of the collector, but the value of the collection surely depends on the nature of the material collected. Without good sense and good taste industry is thrown away—as indeed is even kindness of heart. It is not a real service to young people to encourage them, because they have a working knowledge of their native language, are versed in the clichés and catch-words of the day, can bandy jargon with one another, to believe that they can write " poems." Poetry is a high and difficult art and has nothing to do with the sham, the shoddy, the threadbare in thought or sentiment, with the flabby, the fumbling, the amateurish in technique. What a reviewer, writing here, says of another volume of verse might be applied to this :—" They (the poems) are written mostly in what, I suppose, must be called ' free verse,' but there seems no particular reason for the shape any particular stanza may take, nor any reason for its lack of shape." This is not true of every single poem here—a few honourable exceptions are evident—but there is a mass of writing and the mass is bad.

Not very much more can be said for the prose section of the book. An article on *The Ancient Mariner* and *The Waste Land*, slight but convincing as far as it goes, an odd review with an authentic ring may be read without distaste, but for the most part the prose, like the poetry, is the trivial utterance of pretentious immaturity.

Incongruous in the midst of so much mediocrity is a set of illustrations to *The Ancient Mariner*, grim and powerful. They are by Mervyn Peake. There are also lithographs to T. S. Eliot's *Rhapsody on a Windy Night* by Gerald Wilde, but they are not to be called illustrations.

LORNA REYNOLDS.

Phoenix Publications. Rs. Seven.

Evidently this book is intended for those People of India who, like the author, have read " voraciously " but who, unlike the author, have not had the opportunity to find out that real conditions are not at all like the picture of their imaginings. Here are the personal impressions formed after eighteen months of travelling and objective study of the contrasting aspects of social and industrial life in the U.S.A.; and, although it contains too generous an amount of elementary history, the book has a high interest value. The chapters relating to the status and conditions of the indigent Amer-Indians (who are no longer a " vanishing-tribe ") and the Negro population, their long but unended struggle for full emancipation and equality of citizenship, show the writer's deep understanding of two of the most complex factors in the affairs of the greatest of all Republics ; but here, as in other parts of the book, many of the



statistical figures will have to be corrected (in another edition) before they can be of any use to the reader. Probably the Printer is responsible for the strange misunderstanding of ciphers, or the misplacement of commas which make 2,70,000 and 4,00,000 (page 270), and which tells us that 1,00,000 miles of electrical line were built for 2,00,000 families (page 249), that there are 9,80,000 high grade and border line defectives (page 236), 1,60,000 laundry workers and 2,32,000 in restaurants (page 306), and so on until Americans and Europeans alike will ignore the quaint arithmetical signs which, even if they were understandable, are not necessary in a convincing account of an Eastern writer's experiences and the conclusions drawn from them in "stream-lined" and "neon-lighted" America.

## BOOKS RECEIVED

- THE LIFE OF EDMUND SPENSER. By Alexander C. Judson. The John Hopkins Press, Baltimore. (London: Geoffrey Cumberlege.) 25s. 6d.
- THE BECKER WIVES, AND OTHER STORIES. By Mary Lavin. Michael Joseph. 9s. 6d. net.
- MICHAEL CARAVAN. By Brinsley MacNamara. Talbot Press. 7s. 6d. net.
- THE UNFORTUNATE FURSEY. By Mervyn Wall. The Pilot Press. 8s. 6d.
- DANGLING MAN. By Saul Bellow. John Lehmann. 8s. 6d.
- TRIPTYCH I. APPROACH. By John Redwood Anderson. The Fortune Press. 7s. 6d.
- CHOICE. Some new stories and prose. Ed. W. Sansom. Progress Publishing Co. 8s. 6d. net.
- THE WIND AND THE RAIN. Autumn, 1946. 2s.
- STUDIES IN PHILOLOGY. July, 1946. Univ. of North Carolina. \$1.25.
- E.L.H. A Journal of English Literary History. John Hopkins Press. 75 cts.
- LITTLE REVIEWS ANTHOLOGY. Ed. D. Val Baker. Eyre & Spottiswood. 9s. net.
- THE LIFE OF LLEWELYN POWYS. By Malcom Elwin. John Lane. 15s. net.
- NOT TOO SERIOUS. Essays and Sketches by Lynn Doyle. Duckworth. 7s. 6d. net.
- THE GREEN GARDEN. A New Selection of Scottish Poems. Ed. by James Ferguson. Oliver & Boyd. 8s. 6d. net.
- BEAT DRUM, BEAT HEART. (Poems). By Sheila Wingfield. The Crescent Press. 7s. 6d. net.
- CHARLES AND CROMWELL. By Hugh Ross Williamson. Duckworth. 15s. net.
- LETTERS FROM INDIA. By Alun Lewis. Penmark Press. 15s. net.
- THE SILENT REVOLUTION. By Peter Baker. Falcon Press. Price 1s. net.
- THE POET IN THE THEATRE. By Ronald Peacock. Routledge. Price 10s. 6d. net.
- HOW I SEE APOCALYPSE. By Henry Treece. Lindsay Drummond. Price 8s. 6d. net.
- THE SHEPHERD AND THE HUNTER. By David Martin. Allan Wingate. Price 6s. net.
- THE FIRSTBORN. By Christopher Fry. Cambridge University Press. Price 6s. net.
- THE FIFTH GOSPEL. By H. F. Rubenstein. Gollancz. Price 3s. 6d. net.
- POEMS SATURNIENS. By Paul Verlaine. Centaur Press. Price 5s. net.
- FRANCE AND THE FRENCH. By E. A. Craddock. Nelson. Price 5s. net.
- ENGLISH WINES AND CORDIALS. By André L. Simon. Granol Publications, Ltd. Price 6s. net.
- THE ROSE AND BOTTLE, AND OTHER ESSAYS, by Seumas O'Sullivan. The Talbot Press, 5/-.

